

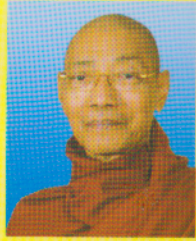


We live with Dhamma Knowledge

The Great Teacher

Collected Dhamma Discourses

Venerable sayadaw
Dr. Nandamālābhivaṃsa



The Great Teacher contains seven Dhamma Talks that venerable dr. Nandamālābhivamsa gave in Myanmar. Each discourse illuminates various aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path. The selection of talks is made with an English reading audience in mind. The topics cover both theory and practice. We hope that these discourses will serve comprehension of the Dhamma and support the practice that leads to the pure and peaceful state.

Discourses:

1. The Great Teacher
2. Live with Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension
3. The Liberated Mind
4. Samatha and Vipassanā
5. Thought of Mind
6. Live with a Heart of Loving Kindness
7. Mettā Bhāvanā



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Acknowledgement

Over the years, followers and students of sayadaw dr. Nandamālābhivamsa, from Myanmar and abroad, have been translating *Dhamma* talks that were given in Myanmar. Titles such as, *The Buddha's Advice to Rāhula*, *The Exits of Mind*, *An Analysis of Feeling (Vedanā)* and lately *A collection of Dhamma Talks (1)*, have seen the light. Thanks to the meritorious efforts of many, these *Dhamma* talks have found their way to the *Dhamma* lovers abroad.

For this book, new *Dhamma* discourses were translated to English and others were revised and edited. The work done for this book by sayalay Dira, sayalay Dhammacari, dr. Zaw Min Nai, daw Ohmar Moe Myint and others is gratefully acknowledged.

May you live with Dhamma knowledge!

Dhamma Sahāya Sasana Centre
Institute for Dhamma Education (IDE)
Pyin-Oo-Lwin, Myanmar
May, 2015

Biography of Sayadaw dr. Nandamālābhivaṃsa

Ashin Nandamāla was born on the 22nd of March 1940 in the village of Nyaung-bin in Sint-ku, Mandalay, the Union of Myanmar. His parents were U San Hla and Daw Khin, who were pious Buddhists.

He was ordained a novice when he was ten years old. His preceptor was Sayadaw U Canda, well-known as the “Sankin Sayadaw”, the presiding monk of the prestigious “Vipassanā” monastery.

Ashin Nandamāla started to learn the *Pāḷi* language and the basic Buddhist scriptures under the tutelage of his own elder brother, Sayadaw U Nārada. At the age of 16, he already passed the Dhammācariya (Dhamma teacher) examination and when he was 21, the Abhivaṃsa examination. He also studied in Sri Lanka and India. He wrote his PhD-thesis about Jainism in Buddhist literature.

Dr. Nandamāla is one of the founders of the renowned Buddhist Teaching Centre, Mahā Subodhayon, in Sagaing, where about 200 monks receive education in Buddhist philosophy and literature.

In 1995, Ashin Nandamāla was conferred the title of the Senior Lecturer, 'Aggamahā gantha vācaka paṇḍita' by the Government of Myanmar and in 2000 the title 'Aggamahā paṇḍita'.

He is Rector of the Sītagū International Buddhist Academy (SIBA) in Sagaing. After being a

Visiting Professor at the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU) in Yangon since its opening in 1998, he was appointed rector of this university too, in 2005.

In 2003, he founded “Dhammavijjālaya - Centre for Buddhist Studies (CBS)” in Sagaing, connected to Mahā Subodhayon monastery. In 2013, he established the Institute for *Dhamma* Education, in Pyin-Oo-Lwin. These institutes serve both Myanmar people and foreigners for further studies and practice.

Ashin Nandamāla serves as a religious worker to promote and propagate the Buddha’s teaching. He has travelled the world to teach *Dhamma*. Since 2003, he gave yearly Abhidhamma courses in Europe.

In Myanmar, dr. Nandamālābhivaṃsa has given many *Dhamma* talks to Burmese and non-Burmese audiences for many years.

Sayadaw Nandamālābhivaṃsa teaches *Dhamma* in a very individual, lively and practical way with many examples from daily life. His talks are filled with citations from the texts and commentaries of *Suttanta* and *Abhidhamma*. Sayadaw teaches with a lot of humour and loving kindness (*mettā*).

Dr. Nandamāla is the author of many books written in Myanmar language, Pāli and English.

Introduction

The Great Teacher presents a selection of seven *Dhamma* discourses that venerable sayadaw dr. Nandamālābhivamsa gave in Myanmar. Each discourse illuminates various aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path. Together, these discourses give a profound view of the mind, the working of the mind and the practice leading to the liberation of the mind as taught by the Buddha.

In *The Great Teacher, venerated by his followers*, Sayadaw teaches us what the Buddha distinguished from his contemporaries in ancient India. His qualities are the qualities that - also nowadays - inspire us to beautify ourselves. With the guidelines of all practices given by the Buddha, this can be effectuated.

In *Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension*, Sayadaw elaborates on two key concepts of the path; *sati* and *sampajañña*. What is it and what is it not. What are supporting factors and benefits and how should we practice to apply the Buddha's counsel: "To live with mindfulness and clear comprehension".

In *The Liberated Mind, free from fetters*, Sayadaw explains how the ten fetters (*saṃyojana*) keep the mind tied to worldly and more subtle desires. With the *Meghiya sutta*, the supportive conditions for liberation are elucidated as well as the methods to

purify one's mind and to overcome the last fetter of conceit.

In *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*, Sayadaw teaches the importance of concentration meditation and insight meditation, and the relation between both. Instruction for both practices is given.

Thought of Mind deals in detail with what occurs most in our minds: thinking. Sayadaw teaches about the background of the ideas around thought of mind, the discernment of the different types of wholesome and unwholesome thoughts in mind, and the ways to learn to control the mind.

In *Live with a heart of loving kindness*, Sayadaw explains about proper speech and shows that angry speech never produces good results. Illustrated with the *Kakacūpama sutta*, Sayadaw encourages us to develop loving kindness in our hearts to overcome hatred and to obtain stable minds.

In *Mettā Bhāvanā*, Sayadaw elaborates on the enemies in ourselves and he explains in more detail about the practice of loving kindness meditation.

May these profound and compassionate teachings of venerable sayadaw Nandamālābhivamsa support the readers' path to the peaceful state.

- 1 -

The Great Teacher

venerated by his followers

Introduction

It is now¹ 2600 years ago that the Buddha attained Enlightenment. We are fortunate to have the chance to learn, hear and practice the Buddha's teachings. This is possible because his teachings have been transmitted from generation to generation, from that time until now.

Today's talk, "The great teacher, venerated by his followers" refers to the Buddha. In the *Mahāsakuludāyī Sutta* from the *Majjhima Nikāya* (The Middle Length Discourses, 77), the Buddha explains to Udāyī, a wanderer and leader of a sect, why the Buddha is admired and respected, contrary to some of his contemporary leaders of religious groups.

¹ This *Dhamma* talk was given on February 20, 2011.

In the *Sutta*, it is described that people of other religions recognized that the Buddha was the most respected leader compared to other teachers who held and taught other philosophies. We find the explanation of this point in the *Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta*. When the Buddha was living in Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, six leaders of other religions groups arrived there with their followers. At that time an event occurred that was the cause for this *Sutta*.

The Buddha visits the wanderers

On his way to Rājagaha early in the morning for alms, the Buddha went into the wanderers or Paribājaga's park. In the scriptures, it says that the Buddha went there by chance. However, he went there probably with the purpose of creating the condition to talk about the current topic, for the Buddha was able to foresee any matter.

When the Buddha went into the park, a large assembly of wanderers was making an uproar, loudly and noisily they were talking pointless talk. The Buddha would call this kind of talk "*tiracchāna kathā*" (profitless talk). Udāyi, who venerated the Buddha, notified his followers when he saw the Buddha in the distance: "The venerable Gotama is coming. Be quiet. He likes silence and blesses it." This was one of the reputations of the Buddha. The Buddha always lived in noble silence; he loved noble silence. He taught his monks that when they would speak, it should be

something related to the *Dhamma* or else not to speak at all and keep noble silence. So, when someone went to the Buddha's residence, one would hear words related to the *Dhamma* or silence. All the people of the other religious groups knew that.

Sakuludāyī came down and welcomed the Buddha. He revered the Buddha very much, so he sat at a lower place than where the Buddha sat and his followers too. After the Buddha had greeted them, he asked what they had been talking about. Sakuludāyī answered that it was about the leaders of religious groups. The question was raised who of the well-known leaders, who taught their followers about their respective philosophies, was the most respected by his followers.

The wanderers about six religious leaders

At that time, there were six well-known religious leaders. One of them was Purāṇa Kassapa, founder of the *Akiriya* School. It is a doctrine of non-action (*akiriya*), it denies the possibility of good or bad actions. Some of his followers criticized and blamed him for not knowing this view deeply and for practicing in the wrong way.

Another one was Makkhali Gosāla, whose philosophy was "*Saṃsāra-suddhi*" or "*Ahetuka*" view. This idea means 'purification through *saṃsāra*' or 'causelessness'; things happen by chance, and are not caused by anything. It said for example, that after 4

million *Mahākappa*, (*kappa* means an unimaginable period), the life of a being will be extinct (end of rebirths). A consequence of this view is that a wise person is not able to make his stay in *saṃsāra* shorter, and *saṃsāra* would not be longer for a stupid person. He gave an example of a ball of thread that is dropped from a height. Holding one end; it will roll until its end and then it stops. Like that, the round of rebirths of all beings will end when the time is up. That was his view. His disciples were not satisfied with this view. Although they were his followers, they criticized Makkhali Gosāla, said that he knew nothing and that his view was wrong; some left the group.

The third one was Ajita Kesakambala. His name "Ajita" means 'unconquered' and "Kesakambala" means that he wore a blanket made of human hair. The view he preached was "*Natthika*", this is a nihilistic view saying that there is no advantage of *dāna* or performing meritorious and de-meritorious deeds. There is no existence in this world (*loka*), or the next one. "*Natthi mātā natthi pitā*" means there is no mother or father. So, there is no effect of insulting parents or looking after them. "*Natthi sattā opāpatikā*" means there is no being that is being reborn. He objected to the existence of a Buddha or anyone who practiced the right way, who achieved noble wisdom or was able to teach the people. Some disciples of Ajita Kesakambala opposed him, blamed

him and left his group. He could not control his group and did not get praise from his disciples.

The fourth one was Pakudha Kaccāyana. He preached "*ekaccasassata vāda*"; some things are eternal and some are not. In his view, nothing is permanent, except these seven things: the four elements (earth, air, fire, water), *sukha* (happiness), *dukkha* (suffering) and *jīva* (life/soul). His view was criticized by his disciples and some abandoned him.

The next one was Sañjaya Belatṭhaputta and his view was "*Amarāvikkhepa vāda*". This view is a kind of vague and slippery. It denies everything. If someone asked him if something is wholesome, the answer was 'no'. And if then asked, if it was not wholesome, he would not confirm it. He never was exact in his answers. When the venerables Sāriputta and Moggallāna wandered in search of the noble truth (the *Dhamma*), the first teacher they met was Sañjaya Belatṭhaputta. They had been his followers for a while. However, he also did not get respect from his disciples, who made him feel ashamed in front of many people, and who left his group.

The last one was Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, also known as Mahāvīra'. Today his view is called Jainism. This leader of Jainism taught *Cātuyāma saṁvara*, which means the discipline of a four-fold restraint. This restraint refers to the four ways. The essence of his view was avoiding the unwholesome. At the same

time, he believed in the presence of *atta* (eternal soul or self). So, venerable Buddhagosa pointed out that some of his ideas were similar to that of the Buddha. For example, to stay away from performing unwholesome deeds. However, as his idea was based on wrong view about self, it led to wrong view. He was a philosopher of *Ahiṃsā* (non-hurting or non-violence).

Furthermore, he propagated to abandon any possession (*apariggaha*) and he stayed naked. He had nothing to wear and even no bowl for alms food. He was so kind because he believed that everything has *jīva* or a spirit (soul). He did not drink fresh water because he felt then as if killing (*pānātipāta*). Farmers did not follow his views because they had to cut down trees and dig in the ground. According to his views, they would be guilty of killing when performing these tasks. Therefore, his followers were people like merchants and traders. His view is still alive in India. However, there was also opposition to his views, there was conflict and some followers left the group.

This was what the wanderers in the park were discussing that early morning, when the Buddha joined them.

Sakuludāyi tells why the Buddha is venerated

The Buddha had many disciples and according to the wanderers, the followers of Gotama respected him very much. Once it happened that the Buddha was teaching a large group of disciples. One person in

the audience coughed, where upon his neighbour requested him to be quiet and silent because the Buddha was teaching *Dhāmma*. How much did his disciples admire the Buddha! Whenever the Buddha was teaching, his disciples always listened in silence. This is a strong indication that his disciples respected the Buddha very much. Moreover, once some monks disrobed. However, they did not criticize the three Jewels (the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha*) but blamed themselves for not being able to continue the practice. They left, but not with the idea that the *Sāsana* (the Buddha's teaching) was wrong and lived as *upasakās*, lay followers.

This was what Sakuludāyi said to the Buddha. Then, the Buddha responded with a question and asked Udāyi for what reasons or for which qualities the Buddha was respected. Udāyi answered that he thought that the Buddha possessed five qualities for which he was venerated by his followers.

The first reason Udāyi mentioned, was that the Buddha ate little. The wanderers were proud of having a small meal and took it as a noble practice. Therefore, he said that the disciples of the Buddha admired him because he ate little food. The second one was the contentment of the Buddha with his clothing. Udāyi said that the Buddha was content with whatever clothes he got. The third one was that the Buddha was content with any kind of alms. The next one was that the Buddha was content with any kind of

shelter he had. The last one, in the opinion of Udāyi, was that the Buddha led a solitary life. He stayed in noble silence and peacefully on his own. That is why his disciples admired him.

When he had spoken, the Buddha explained why these qualities were no cause for admiration by his followers. He said that if his disciples admired him for eating small meals, the disciples having smaller meals might not admire him. Some disciples practiced contently with alms food and ate less than the Buddha. That was not the reason why they admired and respected him.

Regarding the robes, the Buddha said that some of his disciples wore the robe their whole life long and when it was worn out, holes in it were filled with small pieces of clothes from the cemetery and so on. The Buddha however, sometimes wore valuable robes, donated by rich people and kings. Therefore, the ones who wore more simple clothes than the Buddha, would not admire him for this. So, that reason was not true either.

The Buddha explained that his disciples always went for alms. However, when people invited them to have a meal in their house, these monks always refused the invitation. They were satisfied with alms food only. The Buddha, on the contrary, would accept invitations for meals also. If his disciples admired him because of contentment with simple food, the ones

who eat only alms food should not honour and respect him because he did not practice as good as they did.

Next, concerning shelter, some disciples of the Buddha stayed in the open air, for eight months a year. They stayed under trees and in open areas, as a form of practice. Only in the rainy season, they had a shelter. The Buddha did not practice like this and stayed sometimes even in magnificent buildings. Therefore, also this was not a reason for admiration by his followers.

Some disciples of the Buddha led solitary lives. They stayed alone in remote forest areas and returned to the Sangha only twice a month; on full-moon day and new-moon day, for the recitation of *Pātimokkha* (the disciplinary code of conduct). In between, they did not meet each other. Therefore, staying alone as a cause for admiration of the Buddha, was not true either.

In this way, the Buddha explained why the qualities Udāyi had mentioned were not the reasons why the Buddha was venerated by many. Next, the Buddha explained to Udāyi for which five great qualities his disciples respected him. They were very remarkable.

The Buddha explains why he is venerated

The Higher Virtue

The first quality the Buddha mentioned was *adhisīla*, the higher virtue or higher morality. This supreme virtue was cause for veneration because the Buddha was always virtuous and there were never moments of transgressing or degeneration in his moral behaviour. This is obviously right. Sometimes, people transgress, even though they have the position of a leader. For the Buddha, this was never the case. The virtue of the Buddha was supreme, not ordinary.

Knowledge and Vision

The second one was *abhikkanta ñāṇadassa*, excellent knowledge and vision. This is outstanding and valuable knowledge and vision, not common at all. The Buddha could see both the past and future and was able to know what exactly would happen. There was no person who could level him in this quality.

Venerable Sāriputta once made a wrong decision. When he taught the goldsmith's son about meditation, he thought that young people had strong craving. Therefore, he thought that *asubha* practice (contemplation on the foulness of the body) would be suitable and taught him this practice. The student, even though practicing for four months, did not get any *samādhi*. Then the boy met with the Buddha. The

Buddha taught him the right technique, encouraged him to practice and he became an Arahant.

The Buddha had direct knowledge himself and knew what to do. There was no one who could judge this better than the Buddha could. All the outstanding disciples, including venerable Sāriputta, admired the Buddha for this quality. His disciples loved and respected him. Indeed, a teacher needs to have a sharp and brighter view. It is impossible to teach others without having better qualifications with regard to knowledge and vision.

The Higher Wisdom

The third point is great intelligence or higher wisdom. The Buddha had the ability to answer and explain any question. Also, he could respond to any criticism from any person. No one could match the Buddha in wisdom. That is true. Not only foreseeing but also intelligence is important. Therefore, possessing the supreme aggregate of wisdom is the reason why his disciples honoured the Buddha.

The Four Noble Truths

The fourth quality concerns the way of explaining the four Noble Truths. When asked, the Buddha explained about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering. This always satisfied the listener. In general, so-called truths have

some weak points or wrong facts. The four Noble Truths however, are absolutely true. Ledi Sayadaw also emphasizes this in his book "Natural truth, Noble truth and *Paramattha* truth". One can read, '*kusalā anāvajja sukhavipāka lakkhaṇa*', it means that from a natural point of view, well-being is produced by wholesomeness. Indeed, wholesome deeds can give the effect of well-being. By performing wholesome deeds, one can be reborn as a human being and gets the luxury of a human existence. It is true from a worldly or natural point of view. Therefore, in general it is said that being reborn as a human being is '*sukhavipāka*'.

But, is this right? It is such a trouble to get old, suffer and die and these states are also the result of wholesome actions (because one is reborn). Is getting old *sukha* (happiness)? Is *dukkha* (suffering) happiness? Or is death happiness? No, they are not. Although performing wholesome deeds can produce well-being, it seems to be wrong from the point of *Ariya sacca* (Noble truth). It is not true, not absolutely true. From the point of *Ariya* truth it is: '*sabbe saṅkhāra dukkhā*', every conditioned phenomenon is suffering. All are *dukkha*, there is no *sukha*. All *sukha* is included in *dukkha*. Even *jhāna pīti* (joy) is included in *dukkha*. All worldly phenomena (*loka*) are enclosed in the noble truth of *dukkha*. The main cause of *dukkha* is craving (*taṇhā samudaya sacca*). The end state of all suffering is *nirodha*, cessation or *nibbāna*.

The main practice to achieve *nibbāna* is the Noble Eightfold Path.

Everyone accepts these teachings of the Buddha about the four noble truths. In the world, other religions also have absolute truths. They say, '*Idameva saccaṃ mogha maññaṃ*', which means 'only this is right, all the others are wrong and useless'. The assertions about truth of these different religions oppose each other like South and North or East and West. And each holds one's own view as the truth. The four Noble Truths are ultimately true and there are no weak points in it.

Everybody is pleased when the Buddha explained about the four Noble Truths. No disciple could do this better than the Buddha because the Buddha adapted his way of teaching to the capacity of the person and he understood what the person needed to become an *Ariya*, a noble person, and end suffering. He also knew which insight knowledge any person possessed. Also for this reason, the Buddha was greatly respected.

The way to develop wholesome states

The fifth point refers to the teachings of the Buddha on how to develop wholesome mental states. There are 19 kinds of practice (19 *paṭipadā*) in Buddhism. I will mention them in brief. But first, to put it in perspective; if the Buddha instructed someone to follow and practice a specific method

with the aim that this method leads one to *nibbāna* or to another result, it would be achieved. Suppose, we walk up to Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. No matter if we take the eastern, western, southern or northern entrance, we surely will arrive at our destiny. In the same way, all the 19 kinds of *paṭipadā* (ways of practice) as taught by the Buddha, will lead the practitioner to the goal.

Four *satipaṭṭhāna*'s

The first *paṭipadā* is the practice of the four *satipaṭṭhāna*'s. As you know, these are *kāyānupassanā*, contemplation of the body, *vedanānupassanā*, contemplation of feeling, *cittānupassanā*, contemplation of mind and *dhammānupassanā*, contemplation of all other phenomena.

Here, the method to practice is *sati*, mindfulness. But *sati* does not do the work alone. All the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path work together. In the *Pāli* text of the *sutta*, it says: "*kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhiijhādomanassaṃ*"². *Ātāpī* (ardent) means here *sammā vāyāma* (right effort), *sampajāno* (clear comprehension) means *sammā diṭṭhi* (right view), and *satima* (reflecting) is *sati* (mindfulness). In this

² Contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome craving and grief in this world.

teaching, '*kāyānupassī*' is the contemplation of the body, which is *sammā samādhi* (right concentration) together with *sammā saṅkappa* (right thought). In total, the five path factors that work together are *sammā diṭṭhi*, *sammā saṅkappa*, *sammā vāyāma*, *sammā sati* and *sammā samādhi*. By these words in the *sutta*, which occur repeatedly, the Buddha means that these five path factors work together in the meditation to remove all worldly craving and aversion. The path factors of *sīla* are not mentioned here explicitly (right speech, right action, right livelihood), but these form the basis for and support of the meditation.

The Buddha said that the final result for the one who practices according to the *satipaṭṭhāna* method is: "*abhiññā vosāna pāramippattā*". It means that by one's own powerful knowledge, one achieves perfection. Thus, by practicing *satipaṭṭhāna*, one can achieve *arahatta magga* (path) and *arahata phala* (fruition). These are the ultimate goals in Buddhism.

Many disciples achieved *arahatta phala* by practicing *satipaṭṭhāna*. They were very pleased and content with this technique because it leads straight away to the goal. In the same way, the result of practicing any of the *bodhipakkhiya-dhammā* (37 conditions for enlightenment) is *arahatta phala*, or *nibbāna*. That means that all techniques or practices eventually result in *arahatta* fruition. The Buddha

was venerated because the practices he taught were always true and beneficial for the practitioner.

***Samatha* practices**

The next *paṭipadā* are *samatha* (calmness or tranquillity) practices. The eight *vimokkha* practices (stages of liberation) can give the respective advantages if practiced diligently. The ninth *paṭipadā* concerns the eight *abhibhāyatana*; by these eight stages of mastery of *jhāna* practice (*samatha* meditation), one obtains the powers to achieve the goal. The tenth *paṭipadā* conveys the ten *kaṣiṇa* practices (practice with an object, such as a colour or earth). One can practice with one *kaṣiṇa*, and no matter with which *kaṣiṇa*, one can achieve the respective goal. There is no practice that gives no result. Number eleven is the development of the four *jhāna*'s; one can achieve the respective goals by practicing these *jhāna*'s.

***Vipassanā* practice**

The twelfth *paṭipadā* is *vipassanā* meditation. Let's take some note of the *vipassanā* practice taught by the Buddha. In foreign countries, there are some events related to Buddhism. Recently, a monk came back from the republic of Korea and said that in Korea it is believed that the *vipassanā* practice in Myanmar is not the practice taught by the Buddha, but by

venerable Buddhaghosa. This was said and even written. This is just to let you know.

Venerable Buddhaghosa, a famous commentator, wrote about the *Dhamma* by extracting from the Buddha's teachings. It should be accepted that it is not the Buddha's teaching if it is pointed out what fact is altered. However, this vague criticism can be ignored, because it is not true. People who say this, have never read the books until the end and they just give their speculations.

In *vipassanā* practice, the Buddha taught the way to understand *rūpa* and *nāma* distinctly by contemplation. Firstly, '*ayaṃ kāyo satumahābhūṭiko* ', the body is composed of the four great elements. Contemplate it, is it right or wrong? There are solid tissues in our body and these are *pathavī* (earth element). All the liquids, including blood, are *āpo* (water element), the temperature in the body is *tejo* (fire element), the gas in the body is *vāyo* (air element). If the body is analyzed, only *pathavī*, *āpo*, *tejo* and *vāyo* can be found

So, our body is *satumahābhūṭiko*, made up of the four great elements. This is the Buddha's teaching, concerning the contemplation of the body. The body is built with *rūpa*. The body is born in the materiality of sperm and ovum of the parents (*mātāpettika-sambhavo*). Our body grew up by eating food. The grown up body is impermanent (*anicca*), subject to

decay, it has smells, it needs care, but the care for the body cannot prevent the body from getting older. It changes all the time and has the nature of deterioration.

Nāma (mind) appears depending on the body. This is explained in order to understand the body and mind distinctly. In the *Sāmañña-phala Sutta*, the Buddha taught like this and also in the *Mahāsakuludāyī sutta*. He explained the distinction between the body and mind definitely. Mind and body are as, for instance, a string of ruby. The ruby was carefully pierced and strung with a piece of thread, both the ruby and the string can be seen distinctly. In the same way, the body and mind can be distinctly observed. They are related to each other, but they do not have the same nature. As the presence of a string in the ruby, the appearance of mind in the body can be understood.

In brief, when understanding body and mind distinctly, *vipassanā* knowledge arises that can contemplate *anicca*, impermanence, *dukkha*, suffering, and *anatta*, non-self. When the knowledge becomes strong enough, it will lead to the ultimate goal of *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna*.

Development of supernormal powers

The next *paṭipadā* is, '*manomayiddhi abhiññā*'. The ability to create a copy of oneself by mental power can be achieved by *samatha* practice. The

fourteenth one is '*iddhi-vidha abhiññā*'. The super normal powers, such as creating many kinds of things and going through the ground and the air can be achieved by practicing the respective technique. Another one is '*dibba-sota*', the divine ear, the ability of hearing sound far away and low sound. The next one is '*cetopariya abhiññā*', the ability to know others' mind, what is in the others' mind. Then, the 17th *paṭipadā* is *pubbe-nivāsānussati*, the power to see past lives. There were many people who could see their past lives, by practicing the techniques of the Buddha. This is a great pleasure. The eighteenth one is '*dibba-cakkhu*', the divine eye. This is the ability to see things far away or to see things that are covered by something. Many people achieved this power when instructed by the Buddha. Based on these facts, the Buddha was admired by his disciples because he could teach the practices that were beneficial to the practitioners. That is a great quality.

Some of the practices of other sects were impossible to conduct or virtually impossible even though they seemed to be good. All *paṭipadā* practices taught by the Buddha can be put into practice. In the scriptures, there are many examples of people who successfully practiced these methods.

Removing the *kilesa*'s

The last one is *āsavānaṃ khayā* practice. This is not an isolated practice, but by practicing *vipassanā*,

all the *āsava* (cankers or taints) are abandoned and the state of freedom of *kilesa's* (*nibbāna*) is attained. Many people succeeded when following the instructions of the Buddha.

"Therefore, my disciples venerate me because they practice successfully these nineteen kinds of practice that I teach", said the Buddha in conclusion to Sakuludāyin.

His disciples respected the Buddha not for other reasons. The Buddha explained clearly that these five qualities made his disciples respect him very much: 1. The Higher Virtue, 2. Knowledge and Vision, 3. The Higher Wisdom, 4. The Four Noble Truths and 5. The way to develop wholesome states.

Conclusion

So, my dear *Dhamma* listeners, we admire, honour and venerate the Buddha because he had these outstanding qualities. May you, by remembering the great qualities of the Buddha and by following the practices the Buddha taught, travel fruitfully on the Noble Eightfold Path and finally arrive at your destiny; the cessation of all suffering, the peace of *nibbāna*.

Sādhu - sādhu - sādhu!

- 2 -

Live with Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension

Introduction

One of the principal practices of Myanmar Buddhists is giving and hearing discourses on the Buddha's teachings. Buddhism is seen as a religion. However, different from many religions in the world, Buddhists absolutely do not pray to an eternal God nor make appeals for prayers to be answered. They simply attempt to systematically use and enhance their innate spiritual qualities to gain knowledge and understanding. The development of insight is pursued and is used to deal with and to escape from the vicissitudes and suffering of life. In this lies the vast difference between Buddhism and other religions.

When we say, "we worship the Buddha", we mean that we revere the being who revealed to us the *Dhamma*. It gives a method to learn and correct our own unwholesome ways, to cultivate goodness and to

follow the Noble Eightfold Path, shown by the Buddha.

That is why I have chosen as the title of my discourse "Live with Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension". The Buddha gave two discourses on this theme in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikaya*, under the heading of "*Sati Sutta*". The Buddha gave his discourses in the *Pāḷi* language, so it is only proper if we try to memorize the *Pāḷi* words spoken by the Buddha.

Sati Sutta

The Buddha said, "*sato bhikkhave bhikkhu vihareyya sampajāno*". "A monk should be mindful and clearly comprehending". The essential meaning is that one should live with mindfulness and with clear understanding. Then, the Buddha continued with "*ayaṃ vo amhākaṃ anusāsani*" – "This is my counsel." It means that the Buddha was giving a guideline on how to live life. He was teaching us a lesson on how to behave in life. We on our part should learn from it and live accordingly.

If we live in accordance with this advice then we shall gain extraordinary intellectual power and wisdom. Only equipped with such intelligence, are we able to withstand and overcome the difficulties of life such as grief, anxiety, misery and distress.

No one is free from anxiety and distress

If we look at the world as a whole, we can clearly see that all mundane beings are struggling - in one form or another - economic, social, educational, political and so forth. Sometimes one manages to resolve these struggles satisfactorily and at other times not. One cannot succeed every time. If problems cannot be resolved due to circumstances beyond one's control one suffers from mental stress. Such a state of mind is called *soka* (anxiety or sorrow) and *domanassa* (displeasure or grief).

Soka is an unstable mental state, which occurs when one foresees the occurrence of something that goes against one's wishes; one is then beset with anxieties. This is the mental state of *soka*. It also occurs when unwanted events have already happened.

Domanassa is a mental or emotional state of dissatisfaction or discontent. If something is not according to your wish, frustration arises; an unpleasant mental or emotional state.

Such states of *soka* and *domanassa* harass the mind of everyone more or less frequently, irrespective of race or religion. What causes *soka* and what causes *domanassa*? Every event occurs in accordance with its related cause, so it is essential that we have knowledge of "causes". If the causes

cannot be found and eliminated then *soka* and *domanassa* will continue to arise repeatedly.

Because human beings in the mundane world do not know the real and relevant causes for these aversive states, they turn to inappropriate ways to get rid of pain or sorrow. Of the many ways to alleviate suffering, some try to forget entirely what has happened by pursuing external aid and support. The kind of help they turn to include the use of narcotic drugs or other means. However, such methods do not work and they do not end grief and suffering. The causes are deep within the mind. The use of drugs and other means may bring temporary relief, but in the long term, it brings further problems in the wake of the original suffering. It is not what the Buddha taught.

The guideline provided by the Buddha

The path the Buddha taught does not lead to further problems. It is the path where one uses and strengthens one's mental capacity to think clearly and realize the truth and thereby alleviate mental stress and eliminate suffering.

In this world, many individuals have achieved wealth and success, yet experience frequently mental stress. Stress and strains constantly overwhelm the human mind and this mental state is more prevalent these days. Nowadays, everyone is caught in a struggle or competition with others, wanting to do better

or to be more successful. Stress is more widespread in countries that are more developed. There may be other methods for easing stress but they do not have the capability to bring enduring peace. With certainty, it can be said that only the method taught by the Buddha can bring a stress-free life with lasting peace.

MBSR

Some years ago, I went to South Korea to give lectures on *Abhidhamma*. Professors and lecturers from Dongkuk University and other universities attended the lectures. *Abhidhamma* is the doctrine closest to life because it is the study of the nature of the inner processes of what is considered oneself. The Korean *Theravāda Rahan* organization had arranged for me to meet with five persons after each lecture. They could ask any questions they wished.

When they came, they introduced themselves as professors and lecturers. So, I asked them what subjects they taught. One of them answered MBSR and when I asked what that stood for, the reply was *Mindfulness based stress reduction*. When I went on to ask where this subject originated from, he told me that it was developed in America and that lectures on it were given at their universities. On careful inquiry, I discovered that this subject was none other than the *Satipaṭṭhāna* method. What they were teaching as an academic subject in the universities was the application of the *Satipaṭṭhāna* method for achieving

awareness based on mindfulness to lessen the stresses and strains that arise in people. It seems they were giving lessons on the Buddha's teachings after making suitable revisions and innovations. This seemed to be what they were doing, but I did not ask for any details. This shows to what extent the Buddha's *Dhamma* has flourished in Myanmar where it is being propagated in theory as well in practice in the many meditation centres. We now know that the method of meditation as taught by the Buddha is widely accepted and practiced to improve health and to reduce depression and stress.

There are different levels of understanding to the saying "to live with mindfulness and with clear comprehension". People in their daily business often say, "We must be alert, heedful and be knowledgeable." Also, in daily life, people speak about "awareness and knowing", or they say they 'know', or 'yes, I am aware of that'. Is this the same as what the Buddha taught? Superficially, these terms may have similar meanings, but there is an huge difference in essence.

A guide to live

So, what did the Buddha mean when he said, "live with mindfulness and with clear comprehension"? How does one do this, to go beyond *soka* (anxiety) and *domanassa* (sorrow) and free one's mind from the burning emotions that overwhelm it?

How does one extinguish such fires to attain peace and tranquillity? We need to know exactly the answer to this. It surely is not the common awareness or knowledge that guides mundane life.

The Buddha gave a clarification in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and the two *Sati Sutta*'s. Some persons, after studying the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, may arrive at the conclusion that it belongs to the religious sphere, or that it is not relevant to social or economic affairs, or to educational or political affairs. The methods taught by the Buddha, however, are not just for religious pursuit or practice, nor for the sake of knowledge or social relations. It is a guide to life as a whole. Any person who has been blessed with life should live according to this method. Anyone who lives in accordance with this method, irrespective of whether he or she is Buddhist or non-Buddhist, will benefit from it. It is not exclusive for Buddhists to practice this *Dhamma*. It is for everyone, because the *Dhamma* is the Law of Nature, it is nature itself.

It may be compared to a path on which anyone can walk. For example, let us say there is a road that leads directly to the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. Any person following this road, whether he or she wishes or not, will surely arrive at the Shwedagon Pagoda. Anyone who walks this way will arrive there, no one excluded.

Likewise, the *Dhamma* taught by the Buddha applies to everybody. There are certain needs in daily life and the reason why there are such needs is that we are living. Therefore, we experience worry and anxiety and face mental pain and suffering. Some might say, "We have nothing to be worried about, for everything is going smoothly for us". This is not so. Someone may have not yet experienced any reason for anxiety, but it will come because there is no human being without fear and anxiety. Such is the human condition. Human beings experience the mental stresses of *soka* and *domanassa*. If we cannot remove them, we cannot live a life of peace. You may describe your life with nice words such as 'peaceful' and 'happy', but no matter how beautiful the words, there is no way that you will be able to lead a life that is always peaceful.

What are the necessary conditions for a life of peace and joy, a life of tranquillity? Some may believe that life can be peaceful and happy if they have enough resources and wealth, or if they have jobs with a good income. Others may hold that life can be pleasant and happy if their social needs are fulfilled. But even when these needs are fulfilled, it is very difficult to be free of *soka* and *domanassa* without the proper method. If you truly wish to live a happy and peaceful life, you must follow the advice of the Buddha: "Live with mindfulness and clear understanding."

Whatever the difficulties you face, whatever the problems, it is very important to have strength of mind. If you lack strength of mind, your heart will be filled with dread and fear as soon as you face a deplorable situation.

In order not to suffer such a loss, the Buddha gave guidance on how to live, by saying: "*sato bhikkhave bhikkhu vihareyya sampajāno*", "Live with mindfulness and clear comprehension" and "*ayaṃ vo amhākaṃ anusāsanī*", "this is my advice".

What did the Buddha mean? Unless this is made clear, people who are concentrating on their work, whether at home or at the office or at the university, may think they follow the Buddha's way when using these terms. The terms used in the Buddha's advice are essentially different, as shall be seen.

Definition of Sati

In life, one must live with *sati* (mindfulness) to free the heart from the heat of passions and remain at peace. *Sati* simply means being conscious of something that is being perceived. *Sati* is usually translated into English as mindfulness and it principally refers to being conscious or aware of current perceptions. However, when referring to perceptions of the past year, or the past 5 or 10 years, it is also *sati* and then it is translated as memory.

Thus, *sati* has two meanings, the first is awareness of current perceptions (and is associated with concentration) of the mind, the second is remembering and memory. *Saññā* (perception) recognizes or remembers the object. When the sign is noted by the mind it comes to know or recognize that something is so and so. That is the task of *saññā*. *Sati* however, is something that receives or gets the perception. That is why it can be said that *sati* is that what receives the sensation or perception, while *saññā* is that which stimulates memory of what has been perceived or experienced.

Present awareness of the visual object that the eye sees, the sound that the ear hears, and so forth, is mindfulness. The mind concentrates to its full strength and it focuses to its full strength. This *sati* is indeed very important. It has two functions: memory of past consciousness and awareness of the present, ongoing consciousness.

Not to be without mindfulness

We should be mindful about our actions in the present; whatever we may be doing, we must be mindful about. Only this focus or concentration of *sati* on the present moment has the capacity to give peace of mind.

Then, when saying there must be *sati* or mindfulness, it may be asked on what the mind must focus? Of what must we be mindful? How shall those

individuals who wish for peace of mind put this into practice? In the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna sutta*, the Buddha gives an answer to this. We must be mindful of four kinds of perceptions:

The first is the body; we must be mindful of our body (*kāyānupassanā*), of the postures, movements, sensations and so forth.

The next one is feeling (*vedanānupassanā*). When the sensations or perceptions are good, there is a feeling of joy and when the sensations and perceptions are bad then we feel frustrated or sorrowful. Then there are sensations that are neither good nor clearly bad but somewhere in between. So, in brief, humans have three kinds of feelings. And these feelings are of utmost importance for humans because they can cause our (bad) reactions. The Buddha instructed us to be mindful of feelings.

The third group of perceptions that we should be mindful of, is the states of consciousness that arise in the continuum of the mind (*cittānupassanā*). Generally, most people believe they know their minds. However, this is hardly the case. What we really should know is "Are desires as greed and lust arising in my consciousness? Is hatred or anger arising in my mind? Is delusion, the ignorance of truth, arising in my mind?" With these questions, we consider the various states of our consciousness. We should

constantly observe and scrutinize the state of our minds. And of this we should be mindful too.

As the fourth group of perceptions, the Buddha furnished us with a general guideline, which is known as *dhammānupassanā*. *Dhamma* is a term that refers to any phenomenon that arises in the mind. Being aware of and contemplating on these mind objects, is *dhammānupassanā*.

Five hindrances

For example, there are five states known as *nīvaraṇa* or hindrances that usually arise in our mind. These mental hindrances are obstacles to the cultivation of a good or pure mind. Because they hinder the goodness or good-heartedness of the mind, they are regarded as states that taint and make the mind impure. These are the five:

Kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa – Hindrance of desire for sense pleasure. One has to be mindful of whether the desire or longing to indulge in sensual pleasures is present or absent in one's consciousness.

Byāpāda nīvaraṇa – Hindrance of aversion or ill-will. There is a feeling of discontent or resentment in the mind, so you have to reflect carefully on whether such a form of anger is present or absent in the mind.

Thīna-middha nīvaraṇa – Hindrance of sloth and torpor. When you are doing a worthwhile job, like

educational work or studying a certain subject, *thīna-middha nīvaraṇa* might occur. It is a kind of lethargy or weariness of the mind (*thina*) or feelings of physical tiredness or exhaustion (*middha*) or else the concomitants of the mind have become dull and sluggish. *Thina* and *middha* usually occur simultaneously but *thina* is reluctance of the mind to continue one's efforts and when this reluctance reaches an extreme then the physical body also becomes dull and slothful. This is its meaning. However, in the scriptures it is said that *thīna-middha* occur when the mind (consciousness or *citta*) has become listless and dull which is the state of *thina*, and *middha* is the state when the concomitants of the mind (mental factors or *cetasika's*) have lost all energy and capability to function well. Nevertheless, there are occasions where *middha* concerns the physical body. When a person is physically exhausted then he begins to feel lethargic. When this state is present in the mind; all enthusiasm has gone. It is therefore an obstacle for success.

Uddhacca and *kukkucca nīvaraṇa* – Hindrance of restlessness and worry. The mind is not at rest, but is wandering; going here and there. That state is *uddhacca*. When there are doubts or regrets about past actions one has done, there is a kind of anxiety or remorse. That is *kukkucca*. If one has failed in some endeavour, is one overwhelmed with discontent or

not? Such a state is also *kukkucca*. It is important to know whether this state is present in the mind or not.

Vicikicchā nīvaraṇa – Hindrance of sceptical doubt. This is the state when a person is plagued with doubts about one's actions, whether or not they are right or wrong. This *vicikicchā nīvaraṇa* is also a hindrance to success.

To reflect on the nature of mind and its processes is *dhammānupassanā*, we can reflect on these hindrances and be mindful of them. When we are not mindful of them, what are the consequences? We are overwhelmed by these states of the mind. Our ability to think intelligently will be severely weakened. That is why the Buddha said that we must be mindful of whether such states are present or not in our mental processes.

When the Buddha stated that we should live with mindfulness, he meant that we should not let our mind go astray from the body. Often, we are physically sitting in a certain place, but the mind is somewhere else. We are reclining in one spot but the mind has wandered to another place. We may be walking somewhere with the mind far away. The mind and body usually are apart; they are not in contact, this is obviously not a state of being mindful.

Mindfulness means being fully aware that one is sitting when seated; that one is lying down when the body is lying down and that one is walking when

walking. It needs practice to be mindful in this manner. This practice is the first stage in the method to cultivate the habit of mindfulness.

Supporting factors for sati

To cultivate mindfulness, several supporting factors are required. One is the endeavour to make effort. Without effort, mindfulness cannot arise. Therefore, effort needs to be present continuously. Your mind must be firmly determined like this: "I shall make the utmost effort to know constantly the behaviour of my body." Such continuous effort is *sammāvāyāma* (right effort). The term used in the *Mahāsatiipaṭṭhāna sutta* for this kind of endeavour is *ātāpī*. *Ātāpī* means ardent and it is needed for the elimination of the defilements in the mind.

These unremitting efforts require a clear understanding of what is real; this is *sampajañña*. Thus, in saying that one should not be without *sati* or mindfulness, *sati* is not the only factor; it is just the header that includes all other factors. The other supporting factors of *sati* are *vīriya* (energy), *samādhi* (concentration) and *samma saṅkappa* (right thought). It means that mindfulness can be found when these supporting factors are also present. We, in our daily life, must put emphasize on these factors as well, to achieve strong and continuous mindfulness. If we pursue this practice in whatever we do, we will be in

unity with mindfulness. When the Buddha taught mindfulness, it meant mindfulness in all we do.

Sati is a means of knowing the sensations described in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna sutta*. Thus, the task of *sati* or the function of *sati* is knowing, being aware of, the sensations, but it is not the task of *sati* to judge the sensations or to get to know their nature; it is not capable of doing so. Its function is merely to apprehend or to know them. It is only through *paññā* or wisdom that we come to know their nature. It is thus a job to be done in cooperation: If *sati* cannot receive the sensations then wisdom cannot carry out its task. It can perform its task only if the sensations are noted by *sati*. Their respective natures are complementary. That is why the Buddha said, "Live with mindfulness and knowledge".

To illustrate this: If we wish to read a book, the hand needs to first open it so that the eyes can read it. Without the help of the hands, the eyes are helpless for they cannot open the book. The hands have to open the book to enable the eyes to read. The job is done in cooperation. It is the same for *sati* or mindfulness and *paññā* or wisdom. It is *sati* that gives access to the sensations and it is wisdom that knows the nature of the sensations. That is why mindfulness and knowledge or wisdom must work in conjunction.

What the Buddha meant by "being mindful" when we do something, was to focus or concentrate

on the body, the feelings, the conscious mind or to concentrate on the *dhamma's*, the general objects of the mind. This is how we practice mindfulness of the four kind of perceptions or objects of the mind.

Clear comprehension

After mentioning mindfulness, the Buddha said one should live with knowledge or clear comprehension. In this context, the term "*sampajañña*" is used for clear comprehension. The term "*sati-sampajañña*" is also used to denote a person. So, the term "*sampajañña*" is used to denote both a person and the mental state of clear comprehension.

Sampajañña may be translated to mean comprehension. Comprehension and reasoning must be applied to the sensations perceived and noted by *sati*. In the scriptures, *sampajañña* is classified into three different kinds.

Sappāyasampajañña – This form of comprehending distinguishes what is wholesome or unwholesome. For example, we try to think whether a certain kind of food is healthy or harmful for us. The ability to comprehend is necessary to distinguish whether something is suitable or not.

Sāttikasampajañña – This form of reasoning helps us to comprehend what is useful or advantageous for us. For example, by contemplating

the question, "If I do this or that, will it be useful or harmful?"; "If I speak thus, will it be useful or detrimental?" Comprehension about the usefulness of certain actions is *sātthakasampajañña*.

Asammohasampajañña – This is the last and highest stage of comprehending and it is based on both *sātthakasampajañña* and *sappāyasampajañña*. *Asammohasampajañña* is the form of comprehension that sees the innate nature of things and their events, that is, the causal relation of all phenomena. It is a form of clear comprehension, which realizes that no individual or person is involved in the process. There is no confusion about it. Thus, *asammohasampajañña* is a higher level of understanding.

Mindful of seven aspects of life

The Buddha's exhortation, "to live mindful and with clear comprehension", means that during our daily activities we must be mindful of and have clear understanding about seven aspects of our life. These seven can be found in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

The first concerns *sati sampajañña* about our bodily actions. It means that we must be mindful of and have clarity of understanding of any bodily movement. The small ordinary movements are meant here. For example when we take a step forward or when we take a step backward, when we move our body forward or backward. We must practice to make

such backward and forward motions with clear awareness or *sati sampajañña*.

The moment something is done unwittingly or mindlessly, we suffer. Accidents happen - we may slip and fall. This is due to a lack of mindfulness. The Buddha said there must be presence of mind and clear comprehension even in trivial matters such as moving forward or backward. Wondering whether there will be danger in moving forward or not, helps our understanding. This is practice; we practice first with these small and trivial things. This is thus the first stage.

The second stage is the practice of mindfulness and reasoning with regard to observation. The eyes are meant for seeing, but also in seeing there must be mindfulness and comprehension. It means that we must not see things in a mindless way, because based on what is seen, *lobha* or greed may arise in the continuum of consciousness, or *dosa* or anger may arise. In order to prevent the occurrence of *lobha* and *dosa* with regard to what we see we must use our reason, in accordance with *sātthakasampajañña*, to set our sights only on that which is of benefit and avoid that which is of no benefit.

Thirdly, we must be mindful and thoughtful of how we bend or stretch our arms and legs with *sati sampajañña*. We must not do it unwittingly but with mindfulness. Stretching or bending must be done with

mindfulness, for if it is done absent-mindedly, unexpected problems could arise. For instance, if you stretch your arm or leg when there are people around, you might push someone or crush someone or you might accidentally touch or get hold of something that may cause harm. That is why even with regard to such seemingly small movements the Buddha stated that we must learn and practice to be mindful and thoughtful.

Fourthly, it is said that in clothing there must be mindfulness and thoughtfulness. Whatever is worn, we must be mindful of and we must clearly comprehend what it is we are wearing.

The fifth concerns food and drink. It means that we must have awareness and understanding of what we eat or drink. Whether we eat or drink, it should be done with mindfulness.

Sixthly, even in performing unavoidable natural functions like going to the toilet (to urinate or defecate), we need to be mindful always, the Buddha taught in great detail.

Then the final, seventh, aspect says that when walking we must be mindful that we are walking; when standing that we are standing; when sitting that we are sitting; when laying down to sleep that we are laying and on waking that we are awake. We must practice not to be without mindfulness and clear

comprehending about our postures and the changing of postures.

When we talk, we must be conscious and mindful of the fact that we are talking. And then, the Buddha made his exhortation complete by stating that not only must we be mindful of the fact that we are talking, but we must also know when we are silent. If we are sitting silently then we must be conscious and mindful of the silence. So, even when we are silent, it is necessary to be mindful and aware. Often, when a person is silent, people think, "This person is sitting there without saying a word", without knowing what is passing through that person's mind. If mindfulness is lacking in this silent person it may be well that greed is playing havoc in his mind, or that anger, pride or jealousy possess his mind.

So, to be free from such states, the Buddha has instructed us not to be without mindfulness and to live with clear understanding. This is a mental exercise and practice. Meditation does not necessarily mean that we must be sitting. Any practice in any posture with the purpose of developing mindfulness and clear comprehension is meditation.

Benefits

What then are the benefits? What do we gain from learning about these mind processes? We can prevent the occurrence of greed, anger, pride, and envy in our minds as well as the unwholesome

consequences generated by them. When a mental state occurs, it immediately generates an effect of which we are usually unaware.

For instance – a person who gets angry only knows that he is angry but he is unaware of what this anger generates in his mind, body, speech or actions.

So, let us look in detail at a person who is angry: First, he feels a sense of dissatisfaction that at the same moment destroys peace in his heart. Who then is responsible for destroying this peace? Who or what is responsible for the fire in one's heart? It is the immediate effect of *dosa* or anger. If this cannot be controlled, this person's body will tremble, the eyes will turn red and so forth – all this is caused by anger; these consequences result immediately from anger. Then it reaches the stage when he will say words that should not be said. This also is the outcome of anger. Then physical assault and bodily harm may follow. This is how anger can escalate. The main cause of all the evil consequences is *dosa* or anger.

Hence, when greed, anger, pride or envy arises in one's stream of consciousness, one loses peace at heart at once. This is the loss, that one suffers. Thus, if you can control or prevent the rise of such mind states, then the harmful consequences will not follow. This will benefit one's life, for there will be peace. No more problems will arise.

If anger can be controlled, the problems caused by anger will no longer arise. If greed can be controlled then the problems caused by greed can no longer arise and the problems caused by *moha* or delusion will no longer arise if *moha* can be controlled. These are the instant benefits if instant action is taken. However, these benefits cannot be known if you do not think about them.

So, these are the concrete benefits that you can gain. The Buddha said these are "*sandiṭṭhiko*", meaning that these can be understood and seen by all people because these are common to life. But they cannot be obtained through prayer. They are direct benefits from application of the guidelines and from practice.

The Buddha's exhortation was: Whatever you do, do it with mindfulness and clear comprehension. This covers every aspect of human behaviour mentioned in the seven categories. He encouraged us to practice unremittingly, during all activities in our daily life.

The assertion of the second Sati Sutta

In the next *sutta*, the Buddha went on to explain how the power of comprehension does not stop here and that this is just the elementary basis. When knowledge progresses we come to clearly understand how all natural phenomena come into existence, remain for a while and then disappear. To understand

this, we must try to reach this higher stage of wisdom. To accomplish this, we should practice *Vipassanā* meditation.

If we can undertake *Vipassanā* meditation what will we come to understand? In this *Sati sutta*, the Buddha taught that it is useful to learn to see three factors in more depth. The Buddha emphasized these factors because they are very relevant to human beings.

The first one is *vedanā* or feeling. Feelings play a central role in human life. Our daily lives are coloured by feelings. There can be happy feelings or feelings of unhappiness such as sorrow or grief. In addition, there are feelings that are neither pleasant nor unpleasant, these are rather vague feelings (*adukkhamasukha*) and not easy to recognize. By practicing, one begins to see these feelings in one's consciousness. Once such a feeling arises, one is distinctly aware of its presence and is equally aware when it vanishes.

The next factor is *saññā* or perception, which makes a mark each time there is contact between the senses and the object. In the meditation, one also knows clearly, when *saññā* arises and when the *saññā* factor is present. One also clearly comprehends when *saññā* has disappeared.

Then, the mind of humans has the tendency to think. Our thoughts easily wander, every time we

think of something. These straying thoughts are known as *vitakka*; thinking or imagining. Clear comprehension knows when thinking arises, when it persists and when the mental processes of thinking and imagination disappear. When one comes to know the processes of the mind, then the strength of mindfulness and knowledge increases and one attains *vipassanā* insight and sees things with great clarity.

The different levels of knowledge

When one has attained *vipassanā* insight then one gains the ability and power to abandon greed (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). As *vipassanā* insight matures, it gains strength and momentum. The ultimate insight gained from the practice of *vipassanā* meditation is that in reflecting upon the nature of *saṅkhāra*, or the conditioning forces to which physical and mental phenomena are subject, one comes to realize the termination of *saṅkhāra* and with this realization *lobha* or greed is uprooted; *dosa* or anger is uprooted and *moha* or delusion is uprooted. They are gone forever. That is the emergence of *magga* or path consciousness, which is the result of the rising momentum of *vipassanā* insight. *Magga* consciousness is then followed by the emergence of *phala* or fruit consciousness, which has the power to put out the fires of greed, anger and delusion.

Once you have glimpsed at the cessation of the conditioning forces, which is *nibbāna*, the evil forces in your stream of consciousness are entirely uprooted. If you are able to raise your knowledge to the highest level of *vipassanā* insight knowledge, the distress and sorrows that have set your heart on fire and made it impure, will be eliminated. The Buddha said in this *sutta* that one would then attain genuine peace and live a tranquil life.

Conclusion

Therefore, we all should bear in mind the Buddha's exhortation: "Live with mindfulness and with clear comprehension". Each of us has to consider carefully what to do.

I sincerely express the wish that anyone who desires to live a life of peace and tranquillity will have full faith and confidence in the assertion that "If we follow this path, we surely shall attain a peaceful life (*nibbāna*)", and that they may be able to make every endeavour to pursue this practice.

Sādhu - sādhu - sādhu!

- 3 -

The Liberated Mind

Free from Fetters

Introduction

The goal of Buddhism is to achieve the liberated mind. One who has attained '*vimutticitta*', a liberated mind, is an Arahant, a person who has achieved the highest goal, the highest level of liberation. This is what we as Buddhists strive for.

Everybody loves freedom. People often speak about freedom. Some claim that they are free and peaceful because their children are grown up and they are not tied anymore by the care for their children, some because they do not need to work, some because they have nothing to worry about. An imprisoned person, who comes out of jail, says that he is free and here it is about freedom of body.

The level of freedom in the mind of most people in the mundane world is very different from the liberated mind that the Buddha's teachings aim at. According to the Buddha's teachings, the liberated

mind that many people mean, is not a free mind. Some people say that they are free. Actually, they are tied by their attachments. A person can learn whether his or her mind is with or without attachments by listening to the *Dhamma* taught by the Buddha.

An almost similar *Pāli* word to '*vimutticitta*' is '*cetovimutti*'. With this expression, the result of *samādhi*, a state of mental calm, is meant. When there is *samādhi*, one is free from defilements (*kilesa*) or attachments at that moment. However, the *arahata phala* mind, the liberated mind of the highest level, is *vimutticitta*. The defilements and fetters are permanently removed and the Arahant is perfectly liberated. *Vimutticitta* is the result of insight knowledge and this mind is totally pure and free from attachments or fetters (*saṃyojana*).

So, we need to know whether our mind is liberated or not. Some people think that they are free by living alone. Even though they stay alone, they are attached. An attachment can be very subtle and therefore difficult to know. We should know whether there are defilements and attachments in our hearts and how we should practice to free the mind.

Ten fetters (saṃyojana)

There are ten fetters (*saṃyojana*) that keep us bound in *saṃsāra*. These fetters are attachments, ties in our mind, that we need to abolish. If not, we will never attain a liberated mind. The first five of these

are called 'lower fetters' (*orambhāgiya saṃyojana*), as they tie to the sensuous world. The other five are 'higher fetters' (*uddhambhāgiya saṃyojana*) that keep one in the higher worlds.

'Lower fetters'

When there is desire for sense pleasures, there is *kāmacchanda*. What does it mean? It means that one wants to enjoy oneself by seeing beautiful things, listening to pleasant sound, smelling nice smells, tasting delicious food and experiencing sweet touch; having the desire of experiencing it again and again. We need to check whether we are tied to this desire for sensual pleasure or not.

People say that children or property is attachment. But children and property are not real attachments; only the desire for the pleasure, or the craving (*taṇhā*), for the children or the property is the attachment. Some people think that they can be free from attachment to children by staying away from them. This is not true. It is not about staying away from children, but about freeing oneself craving, *taṇhā*. Otherwise, one is in trouble if the child is away, or is doing wrong. Trying to be free from attachment to property does not mean one has to donate it all. It means that one must try to be free from the attachment to the property. Property is necessary to live our life. We need only to try to be free from the craving for property; not necessarily the property

itself. So, *kāmacchanda* is a fetter. How can a mind tied by craving for sensual pleasures be free? It is impossible.

The next fetter is *byāpāda*; hatred is also a kind of attachment. People feel angry, dissatisfied when they sense things they do not like. *Byāpāda* is a kind of attachment, which comes together with disgust, aversion. People do not take ill-will or hatred as an attachment although they accept *taṇhā* as an attachment. However, as long as someone is in the mood of ill-will, or when there is aversion to something, then one remembers this sense of disgust frequently in the mind. Because of being tied to this ill-will, the mind becomes occupied with it.

Just as we remember the persons or the things we love, we also remember the ones we hate. This is *byāpāda*. A mind tied by this fetter is not a liberated mind. We need to try to be free from the desire for sensual pleasures, in order to attain a liberated mind. When there is no *kāmacchanda*, there is no *byāpāda*.

It is not easy to be free from these fetters. Even a *sotāpanna*¹ (stream enterer) and a *sakadāgāmi* (once returner) are not free from them; only an *anāgāmi* (non-returner) is free from them.

¹ The four stages of enlightenment are 1. *Sotāpanna* - 'stream enterer'; 2. *Sakadāgāmi* - 'the once-returner'; 3. *Anāgāmi* - 'non-returner'; 4. *Arahant* or *Arahat* - 'fully enlightened one'.

Attaining the first level of enlightenment, the *sotāpanna* is free from the three fetters that ties one to the sensuous world. These three are *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, *vicikicchā* and *sīlabbata-parāmāsa*. *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi* means that the five aggregates are mistakenly seen as permanent or self. It is wrongly thought that the five aggregates (*khandha*) exist forever and are transmitted from one life to another. The five aggregates are *rūpa* (body), *vedanā* (feeling), *saññā* (perception), *saṅkhāra* (mental factor) and *viññāṇa* (consciousness). *Sakkāya* means the obvious existence of these five aggregates. *Diṭṭhi* means wrong view about these five aggregates. So, the wrong view about the obvious existence of these five aggregates is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. No one who clings to the five aggregates because of this wrong view can attain a liberated mind.

Vicikicchā means having doubt about the Triple Gem (Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*) and about the training or practice, one is carrying out. A person with a wrong view will certainly have doubts. As long as a person holds wrong views, doubts appear in his mind. When there is no *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, there is no *vicikicchā*, sceptical doubt.

The next fetter is *sīlabbata-parāmāsa*. Often, this has been interpreted as the wrong view that one can become enlightened by following rites and rituals. However, the meaning of *sīlabbata-parāmāsa* is somewhat different. Here, *sīla* means habit and *bata*

means following. Everybody has habits, so have the animals. For instance, when a dog is about to sleep, it turns around, lies down while curling up and then it sleeps in crescent position. That is its habit. With the word *sīla*, these animal habits are meant. *Bata* means observance of a duty or obeying a rule. *Parāmāsa* is viewing wrongly or following the wrong practise. Thus, in the time of the Buddha, there were people who wanted to eradicate unwholesome mental states and end their stay in *samsāra*, by imitating the habits of a dog (*sīla*) and following this as a duty (*bata*). It is *parāmāsa* if one believes that *sīla* and *bata* lead to the removal of *kilesa* (mental defilements).

In the Buddha's time, there were so many practises, behaving like a dog, a cow, a peacock or a monkey. People followed the habits of animals. They had a good ambition; they wanted to be free from defilements, but it is wrong view. The Buddha pointed out in the *Kukkuravatika sutta* (*Majjhima Nikaya*), that this way of practise would not bring what they aimed at. This is *Silabbata-parāmāsa*.

Sakkāyadiṭṭhi means the wrong view that the five aggregates are self and permanent. *Silabbata-parāmāsa* means wrong ideas concerning the practice. *Vicikicchā* is sceptical doubt that arises because of these two wrong views.

A *sotāpanna* has overcome these three fetters. He or she does not have a wrong view concerning the

five aggregates and practices. A *sotāpanna* realizes that one cannot escape from *samsāra*, nor purify one's mind by behaving like an animal. There is right view in a *sotāpanna*, so there is no doubt about *sīla*, *samādhi*, *pañña* (the Noble Eightfold Path) and *vipassanā*. When a person attains *sotāpatti-magga*, one is free from three fetters; *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, *silabbata-parāmāsa* and *vicikicchā*. These are the first three of the five fetters that keep a person in the world of sensuous desires. When a person becomes an *anāgāmi*, the other two fetters are overcome (*kāmarāga* and *byāpāda*). However, even an *anāgāmi* has not a fully liberated mind. His mind is still tied to the other five fetters, which are called *uddhambhāgiya-samyojana*, the 'higher' fetters.

'Higher fetters'

The first one is *rūpa-rāga*, craving for fine-material existence; the Brahma world or *rūpa jhāna*. Desire for sense-pleasure is renounced, but craving for the peaceful mind is not renounced. The joy resulting from renouncing sense-pleasure in the *jhāna* state (meditative absorption), is called *rūpa jhāna pīti*. If one cannot give up the wish to be in this state of *rūpa jhāna*, then it is a fetter. This is *rūpa-rāga*, it has the meaning of desire for the mental state of *rūpa jhāna* (also known as fine material world).

Arūpa means without apparent body. There are four *arūpa* worlds, immaterial worlds, where the

beings only have mind. *Arūpa-rāga* means craving for the states of *arūpa jhāna*. The life of beings in the *arūpa* world is long and joyful. As the being has only mind, there is no suffering of the body. When there is a body, many problems of the body are encountered. Therefore, desire and attachment for to *arūpa jhāna* arises.

Taṇhā is very influential. Even though the craving for sense pleasure is renounced, there is craving for *jhāna*. *Rūpa-rāga* and *arūpa-rāga* is the craving for these *jhāna* states. These are the first two of the 'higher' fetters.

Māna, conceit, means having a too high opinion of oneself. Having conceit is very dangerous. With conceit, a person cannot achieve enlightenment. Venerable Anuruddha had conceit, because he had developed the divine eye, *dibbacakkhu*. He could see a thousand universes in one sitting. Because of this conceit, he could not achieve Arahantship. Conceit is one of the higher fetters.

Uddhacca, or mental restlessness is also one of the higher fetters. It is the mental state opposite to *samādhi*. The mind is not stable or peaceful but restless. Mental restlessness can be very subtle and like conceit, restlessness binds the mind too. A restless mind appears very often.

Avijjā is ignorance, it means that one thinks that the wrong things are the right ones and vice versa.

Avijjā, ignorance is persistent. On a subtle level, it is very delicate, and at the same time, it is a strong rope. Since knowing the wrong things is difficult to eradicate, it is a fetter.

The five fetters that keep one tied to higher worlds are *rūpa-rāga*, *arūpa-rāga*, *māna*, *uddhacca* and *avijjā*.²

A liberated mind can be attained by trying to get free from the ten fetters. Even after the attainment of the third stage of enlightenment (*anāgāmi*), the mind is not fully liberated. Only an Arahant has a totally liberated mind.

Thus, an Arahant can be called the winner of *vimutticitta*, the liberated mind. As Buddhists, we try to attain this state of the liberated mind. What can we do to reach this goal? It cannot be achieved immediately. Like fruits, the mind matures gradually and finally becomes mature enough for liberation. To obtain the result, one will have to carry out the causes that lead to the result.

In the *Meghiya sutta (Udana)*, the Buddha taught the *Dhamma* that can cause the immature mind to become a mature one. The origin of the *Meghiya sutta* is as follows. Once, the Buddha was residing on the Cālikā Mountain. The monk who

² Craving for fine material world (*jhāna*), for immaterial *jhāna*, conceit, mental restlessness and ignorance.

stayed with the Buddha and served him was Meghiya, not venerable Ānanda. Nearby was Jantu village, where they went for alms. Every day, he went to that village on alms round and had his meal in a dwelling near the village. In ancient times, the monks rarely had their daily meal in the monasteries; they had their meal in the dwelling in the village or town where they went for alms and where water was easily available. After that, they went to quiet and silent woods, hills and gardens. Those were the customs of the Buddha's disciples in his time.

Near Jantu village, on the bank of the Kimikālā River, was a pleasant and shady mango garden. It was a quiet and peaceful place. When Meghiya got there, he enjoyed that place and decided to meditate there if the Buddha allowed him. On arriving at the Buddha's residence, he told the Buddha about that nice place and asked for permission to meditate there. Whenever anyone wanted to do something, the Buddha always contemplated about it and thus he knew the past of Meghiya. Meghiya enjoyed this garden because he stayed there when he was a king in a previous life. That was why he felt happy when he was there. He did not know about this past situation although it appeared in his mind.

The Buddha realized very well that in this place Meghiya could not achieve enlightenment. It was sure that his mind would turn to a king's mind if he went there. So, the Buddha did not want to allow him to go

there. He did not tell the reason, because Meghiya would not believe him. Therefore, the Buddha told him that he would be alone if Meghiya would go and asked Meghiya to stay with him until another monk would arrive.

Meghiya complained that the Buddha had already attained enlightenment and did not need to make further effort, but he was not enlightened yet, so he needed to try hard and wanted to meditate there. Even though the Buddha refused initially, after having been asked for three times, the Buddha let him go.

When Meghiya got to the garden and started to meditate under the mango tree where he sat as a king in his previous life, the past appeared in his mind although he did not realize it. His mind turned into a king's mind, it was very mysterious. Because of that mind, he saw his former queen and luxuries and *kāmaṅga*, all kind of thoughts about craving for sense-pleasure, appeared in his mind. Next, he saw his opponents in his mind and *byāpāda*, ill-will, entered his mind. That ill-will caused *vihiṅsa*, and his mind became possessed with thoughts about cruel deeds against his opponents.

He was surprised to notice that these moods and thoughts (*kāmaṅga*, *byāpāda*, *vihiṅsa*) appeared in his mind, even though he was meditating. He wondered how these evil states could appear in his mind, even after having abandoned all his

property, living as a monk and trying to purify his mind.

Five conditions for liberation

The Buddha had already foreseen this condition. It happened to him because of *upanissaya-paccayo*, a strong dependence condition. The place of the mango garden was a major support for these moods and thoughts to arise (*āvāsopi upanissaya-paccayena paccayo*). Another strong dependence condition is a person, which is also a major support for a condition to arise (*puggalopi upanissaya-paccayena paccayo*). Nothing comes into being without a cause.

Meghiya was fed up with his condition, left the garden and went to the Buddha. He told the Buddha about his experience. Then, the Buddha taught him that it is not easy to achieve a liberated mind. Besides, there are some conditions needed for the development of the mind. The Buddha continued with teaching these five conditions. that support the development of the mind.

The first factor is to have *kalyāna-mitta's*, noble or good friends who can give guidelines to remove the impurities of mind. The second one is *pātimokkha-saṃvarasīla*. To live virtuous, with restraint, according to the *Pātimokkha*, the ethical modes of conduct of the monks.

The third supportive factor is to hear and listen to talk that is conducive for the development of the mind. It involves talk³ 1.) about being modest; 2.) about the importance of being easily satisfied and content; 3.) about staying secluded and away from *kilesa's*; 4.) about keeping the mind on the meditation object and staying with a peaceful mind and body; 5.) that encourages to fight the impurities of the mind and exert oneself in performing wholesome deeds; 6.) about the precepts; 7.) about calmness; 8.) talk on wisdom; 9.) about the liberation of mind; and 10.) talk about the insight knowledges that lead to the liberation of mind. These ten modes of talk support the development of the mind. We should listen often to this kind of speech.

The fourth factor that is conducive for the development of the mind is *āradhaviṛiya*, the energetic effort that is required to try hard. One should try, unremittingly, to refrain from unwholesome deeds and to remove unwholesome states when these have arisen in one's mind. One should be endowed with these two skills.

The fifth factor is *udayatthagāmini pañña*, it is the condition of increasing insight knowledge about the rising and falling of *saṅkhāra*; the wisdom that

³ 1.) *Appicchakathā*, 2.) *Santuṭṭhikathā*, 3.) *pavivekakathā*, 4.) *asaṃsaggakathā*, 5.) *viriyārambhakathā*, 6.) *sīlakathā*, 7.) *samādhikathā*, 8.) *paññākathā*, 9.) *vimuttikathā*, 10.) *vimuttiñāṇadassanakathā*.

breaks down the impurities of mind. One should try to accomplish this up to the knowledge of *magga* (path knowledge), to obtain the fully liberated mind.

To summarize, these five factors support the development of the mind: (1) having good friends; (2) having virtue; (3) listening to 10 modes of talk; (4) having energy; (5) developing knowledge and wisdom. Out of these, having a good friend is the most important. The good friend is not an ordinary one. It is the kind of friend that also includes the Buddha, one who can show the right way or *Dhamma*. If one has such a friend, one will have the chance to become virtuous, to listen to ten modes of speech, to have energy and to improve one's insight knowledge. So, most important is having a good friend, a *kalyānamitta*. This is *sappurisupanissaya paccayā*, having the company of good friends is a powerful condition. When this condition is fulfilled, then the other conditions also come into being.

One should try to attain a liberated mind by considering these five conditions. It is not easy to attain a liberated mind. The mind needs to get free from craving, hatred and wrong thoughts. Only without these impurities, a liberated mind comes into being. So, the Buddha said to Meghiya to base his efforts on these five qualities.

Four practices to purify the mind

Then the Buddha continued with teaching four *Dhamma's*; four ways of practice to purify the mind and remove the fetters.

To remove *taṇhā*, craving, one should practice *asubha kammaṭṭhāna*, the contemplation of loathsomeness and impurity. Normally, when one superficially sees something or someone as beautiful, craving appears. When this happens, one should think of the internal impurities of the body. In one *sutta*, it was said that if the body is turned inside out, it will need to be protected from crows. The body looks beautiful because of the thin skin, decorations or beautiful clothes. This is only superficial. For instance, when one gets up, the first thing to do is to clean the body from many impurities. Anything that comes out of the body is not beautiful nor smells nice. That is why it all is cleaned every day. Thinking about these facts, there is no way that craving (*rāga*) arises.

Therefore, based on these five qualities, one should practise *asubha bhāvanā* to reduce and remove craving. Contemplation is *Dhamma* practise; there is no need to sit cross-legged. Contemplate the 32 body parts, such as hair, soft body hair, nails, teeth, thick and thin skin, and see if they are worth to be craved for. People take their hair as a precious thing and beautify it when it is on their head. However, they disgust their hair if they see it in their food. It is

surprising. There is saliva in our mouth and we swallow it as long as it is in the mouth. But when it is spitted, it becomes a disgusting thing. Such kind of contemplation is called *asubha*. All the constituents of the body can be contemplated like this.

By contemplating *asubha*, one can remove craving for the body. This is how a liberated mind can be accomplished; by getting rid of craving. If it is not done, one cannot free one's mind. Therefore, the Buddha taught that to remove craving, one should contemplate *asubha*⁴. Try to develop the contemplation of *asubha* again and again, to reduce the attractiveness of bodily things and to understand more deeply.

To overcome hatred, the Buddha continued, one should develop *mettā*, loving-kindness⁵. If the thoughts of hatred are difficult to overcome, one should develop mindfulness of in-breath and out-breath to cut off the thinking⁶ (*ānāpānasati*).

People cannot control their thoughts. People always think, even when staying alone. Thoughts can be classified into three types of wholesome thoughts (*sammā saṅkappa vitakka*) and three types of bad or unwholesome thoughts (*micchā vitakka*). These thoughts are called bad because they obstruct the

⁴ "*Asubhā bhāvetabbā rāgassa pahānāya*"

⁵ "*mettā bhāvetabbā byāpādassa pahānāya*"

⁶ "*ānāpānasati bhāvetabbā vitakkupacchedāya*"

attainment of right knowledge. The bad thoughts are 1) *kāma vitakka*, thoughts engaged in desires for sense pleasure; 2) *byāpāda vitakka*, thoughts about hatred and ill-will, and 3) *vihimsā vitakka* thoughts concerning cruelty and doing harm.

To remove these evil thoughts, one should practice *ānāpānasati*. One should contemplate on and be mindful of breathing in and out, which happens 24 hours a day. By contemplating like that, one can stop all the other thoughts. In this way, one can remove and stop the thoughts concerning craving, hatred and cruelty.

Conceit (asmi-māna)

But it is not complete. Even though thoughts are stopped, wrong views are still left. One may think that the factors related to *ānāpānasati*, such as *sati* (mindfulness), *pañña* (wisdom) and *vīriya* (energy), are permanent in one's mind. This, however, is a form of conceit. Therefore, as next practice the Buddha said that to remove the conceit about 'I', one should contemplate on the impermanent nature of all mental and material phenomena (*anicca saññā*)⁷. That is the *kammaṭhāna* the Buddha taught to Meghiya and it is suitable for everyone.

Even though people think of themselves as having no pride, they do have pride, they think of

⁷ "*aniccasaññā bhāvetabbā asmi-māna samuggātāya*"

themselves as 'I' or 'I am' (*asmi*). To remove the thoughts of 'I' or 'I am', one should contemplate that everything is impermanent, always changing. If conceit (*asmi-māna*) is removed by contemplating impermanence, the perception of not-self (*anatta-saññā*) appears in one's mind (*anattasaññā saṅghāti*) and one will come to realize that one cannot control everything.

People think that they can control everything. This is caused by *māna*, pride. As soon as one understands *anicca*, one comes to realize that everything goes by itself and not by one's control. If someone contemplates *anicca saññā*, one will realize *anatta saññā*. The thought of 'I' has then removed. Then, the conceit (*asmi-māna*) has disappeared as the result of the realization of *anatta saññā*⁸. Moreover, one can have a peaceful mind as a result of it. Therefore, the Buddha said, "*Diṭṭheva dhamme nibbānaṃ*"; the mind is fully liberated.

In a liberated mind no fetters exist, so all craving, hatred and wrong thoughts need to be eradicated. One cannot say that one's mind is free by living alone for example, because it is tied by the ropes of the fetters. To remove all fetters, the Buddha taught Meghiya the five supportive qualities.

1) Find a good friend or teacher

⁸ *anattasaññi asmimānasamugghātaṃ pāpuṇāti*

- 2) Develop and embody virtuousness as a result of having a good friend or teacher
- 3) Listen to *Dhamma*; ten kinds of beneficial speech
- 4) Be energetic
- 5) Develop wisdom

Based on these five qualities, Meghiya was taught to contemplate *asubha* to remove the fetter of craving, to develop loving kindness to remove hatred, to contemplate *ānāpānasati* to stop one's thoughts and to contemplate *anicca saññā* to remove conceit. When one realizes the perception of impermanence of all conditioned things, *anatta saññā* will settle in the mind and pride disappears. As soon as there is no pride, there is no attachment or fetter and the mind will be completely liberated and peaceful.

Such a mind is called *vimuttacitta*, freedom of mind. This is the total liberation of mind taught by the Buddha

Conclusion

A liberated mind is *arahata phala* mind, the fruition of the highest level of liberation. We should try until we achieve that liberated mind. Therefore, my dear *Dhamma* friends, may you be able to try to attain a liberated mind, the goal of Buddhism.

Sādhu -sādhu - sādhu!

- 4 -

Samatha and Vipassanā

Concentration and Insight Meditation

Introduction

Today, meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) is a well-known practice all over the world. Due to this growing popularity, numerous meditation centres have appeared. Many people, regardless of their religious orientation, go to these meditation centres. People meditate for different reasons. Some want to reduce stress and to have a peaceful mind, while others go for the liberation from the suffering of *samsāra* (round of rebirths) and to attain path knowledge (*maggā ñāṇa*), fruition (*phala ñāṇa*) and *Nibbāna*.

Kammaṭṭhāna has mental development as object, it designates the process of mind practice. *Kammaṭṭhāna* is of two kinds: *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Whoever practices meditation, should clearly understand the differences between these two techniques, in order to know if one's practice belongs to *samatha* or *vipassanā*.

What is Samatha?

Samatha is a state of concentration that tranquillizes the opposite mental states like sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*) or hatred (*byāpāda*) etc. *Samādhi* that removes unwholesome emotions and stress is also *samatha*.

The human mind becomes unstable when meeting sensual objects. You see, if on perceiving an object craving for it arises, then there is mental instability and restlessness. If hatred arises, there will be mental instability and restlessness. If delusion arises, there is also mental instability. Such mental instability is tranquillized and removed by *samatha* meditation. The energy of concentration obtained through *samatha* practice not only tranquilizes the mind but also removes mental instabilities. Therefore, *samādhi* really is *samatha*. You should note that both the meditation practice and *samādhi*, are called *samatha*. In the texts, we can read "*Paccanīkadhamme sametīti samatho*". This means that the *dhamma* that tranquillizes and removes the opposite *dhamma* is called *samatha*.

What is Vipassanā?

Vipassanā is seeing things with knowledge in different ways. "*Vi*" means various or different aspects; "*passanā*" means knowledge that sees. In other words, *vipassanā* means a knowledge that sees in extraordinary ways. How does it see in

extraordinary ways? Commonly, people see life as happiness or as their own property. In contrast to this, knowledge that sees life as impermanent, suffering and uncontrollable is called *vipassanā*.

In the texts, we can read "*Aniccā divasena vividhehi ākārehi dhamme passatīti vipassanā*". It explains that the knowledge that sees *saṅkhāra dhamma's* in various ways as impermanent, is called *vipassanā*.

The dhamma's to be practiced

These two *dhamma's*, *samatha* and *vipassanā*, are the *dhamma's* to be developed (*bhāvetabba*) and to be practiced, because without concentration and insight knowledge, *nibbāna* is unattainable. In order to make the unstable mind stable, you should practice *samatha*. To develop excellent insight knowledge, you should practise *vipassanā*. The techniques of *samatha* and *vipassanā* are different and the objects of meditation too.

The objects of samatha practice

In general, the object of *samatha* is a concept (*paññatti*). A concept is a commonly accepted word or consensus for a certain object, but it does not exist in reality. For example, if people accept a colour as white, it becomes white; it is accepted that the name for this colour is white. If red, it becomes red; if

yellow, it becomes yellow. These names are only concepts.

On such an object one tries to focus one's mind, to develop concentration. The practice of *samatha* generally has a concept as object. However, there are some exceptions. *Buddhānussati* (recalling the qualities of the Buddha) and *catudhātuvavaṭṭhāna* (analysis of the four elements) have nature or ultimate reality (*paramattha*) as object. Nevertheless, practice with these objects is also *samatha*.

In *samatha* practice, there are two kinds of concentration, *upacāra samādhi* (access concentration) and *appanā samādhi* (*jhāna* or absorption concentration). To attain *appanā samādhi*, 28 concept objects can be used.

Kasiṇa paññatti

The possible objects are the four elements as concept (earth, water, fire and air); the colour concepts (dark blue, yellow, red and white); the concept of space (*ākāsa*) and of light (*āloka*). These objects are called *kasiṇa* devices and one can focus one's attention fully on a *kasiṇa* device to develop concentration.

Ānāpāna paññatti

Besides the *kasiṇa* devices, you can take the *ānāpāna* concept (breathe in – breathe out) as a *samatha* object. Everybody breathes 24 hours a day

without stopping; the object is therefore readily available. You should try to develop concentration with breathing air as an object.

The Buddha's virtues

If asked whether *samatha* practice is possible by focusing on the virtues of the Buddha, the answer is: yes, it is possible. However, the concentration based on the Buddha's virtues does not lead to the stage of *jhāna* or *appanā samādhi*. Why not? The Buddha's virtues are very deep qualities; they are a kind of reality (*paramattha*). Therefore, the *samādhi* based on the Buddha's qualities cannot reach up to *jhāna*.

If you wish to practice *samatha* on the Buddha's virtues, you firstly have to understand the meaning of the virtues. For example, *Arahant* means the Buddha, who has totally eradicated the mental defilements. To understand this, comparative contemplation is helpful: "I have craving (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*) and conceit (*māna*), but the Buddha does not have these. All mental defilements are no more in the Buddha's mind." Such a comparative contemplation clarifies the meaning. Doing so, one's mental process is easier fixed on the virtues of the Buddha and it becomes real *buddhānussati* practice.

Please note that using a rosary, counting the Buddha's virtues or reciting the words without a concentrated mind, is not real *buddhānussati*. You

should focus on the Buddha's real virtues. By doing so, delight (*pāmojja*) and joy (*pīti*) will come into being.

Preparing the soil

If you wish to practice *samatha* systematically, you have to choose *kaṣiṇa* or 'breathe in – breathe out' as object of meditation.

However, before you start to practice *samatha* or *vipassanā*, you firstly have to purify your morality (*sīla*). If anyone without morality focuses on a meditation object, various other objects will invade the mind. In order to avoid these difficulties you have to restore your *sīla*. If you then consider your *sīla*, happiness will appear in your mind.

"*Sīlaṃ adhippaṭṭissarāya*", it is said, "*Sīla* leads to a state free of worry and remorse". *Sīla* leads to delight, joy, physical and mental tranquillity, happiness, concentration and it leads to knowledge that sees what really is. Therefore, you have to start with purifying your *sīla*. As a layperson, you can do this by restoring the five precepts. You can make the intention: "From now on, I commit myself to not kill any being. I abstain from killing. I fulfil this morality." Considering this, you will be happy. "I shall never take others property purposely." This morality is also pure. "I shall never commit sexual misconduct. I shall never tell a lie, I will only speak the truth. I will not take any intoxicant drink or drug." Having observed *sīla* and then reflecting on your morality will induce

happiness. Happy feelings will arise whenever you consider your *sīla*.

If you then put your happy mind on the *samatha* object, you can develop concentration quickly. If you practice meditation without purification of morality, shadows from the past will invade the mind. The mind does not stabilize because it is under the influence of restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca and kukkucça*). An unstable mind cannot obtain mental concentration. Therefore, the Buddha said "*Sīlaṃ adhippaṭissarāya*". "Morality leads to freedom from remorse". To be free from remorse is very important. The Buddha encouraged us to base our practice on morality, no matter what kind of meditation we practice, *samatha* or *vipassanā*.

A person, who has renounced family life, must purify the monks' morality. For the monks there are 227 rules and he has to make sure he is without offence to any of them. If he breaks any rule of conduct, he has to restore it. Then, he considers his own morality to obtain happiness. Thus, with a happy mind he can focus on the *samatha* object.

Sometimes one may have accused noble persons, or other persons, without restraining one's mouth. Such a deed becomes an obstacle in the meditation practice. It is necessary to make apologies towards these persons. By apologizing, doubt and mental stress cannot remain in one's mind. The

mental tension will be gone. One feels happiness by considering: "I have done everything. There is no doubt or fear".

Preparatory work is important and should be done. If you practice meditation without preliminary purification of morality, it is not easy to succeed. Needless to say, that if you want to cook a meal, you have to prepare the food. If you want to sow seeds, you must prepare the soil. Preliminaries are necessary in every work. When you are about to meditate, you must clean your body and mind, then morality. After that, consider your morality, it will make your mind happy.

If an obstacle occurs during meditation practice, what to do? How to protect the mind from obstacles? The advice of commentators is that you should relinquish your life to the Buddha. On facing obstacles, fear arises. When fear comes into being, the practice cannot continue. One dares not to continue one's practice. If one relinquishes one's body to the Buddha, one may consider; "I have relinquished my body to the Buddha; it does not concern or harm me". In this way, one can restore fearlessness and courage shall strengthen. The mind is then in a different state depending on thinking. Such right thought can reload mental power.

Ānāpāna is useful

The *ānāpāna* object is always available; people breathe 24 hours a day and there is enough breathing air for all people. By focusing on the breathing air, *samatha* is practised. If you follow this practice, you may attain the first *jhāna*. Next, you can proceed to the next stages of concentration on that object; the second, third and fourth *jhāna*. It means that through this method you can attain all *jhāna*'s.

The Bodhisatta, the Buddha to be, renounced worldly life and followed the austere practice, but that was of no benefit. In the end, he found the right path, followed it and finally attained omniscient knowledge. Which meditation object did the Bodhisatta follow? It was *ānāpāna*. To become the Buddha, the Bodhisatta used the breathing air as his meditation object. This meditation object causes one to become an Arahant. If you wish to attain *jhāna* or *magga-phala*, you must focus on the breathing air. The breathing air is of great value and your life depends on it. If you do not make use of the air every time you inhale and exhale, it will be useless.

In this world, there are some people called "*bāla*" (fool). The *Pāli* word *bāla* means here, a person who just breathes but cannot attain any knowledge on this breath. Human beings and animals breathe for their survival and for nothing more. The noble persons, however, used the breathing air as a

meditation object. Doing so, they attained *jhāna* and if they had *pāramī* conditions, effort and the wish to attain them, they attained *magga phala* up to *Nibbāna*.

The Bodhisatta attained *jhāna* focusing on the breathing air. After that, he changed his technique and used the *jhāna* as *vipassanā* object. Through *vipassanā* practice, he became the Buddha; attaining the four paths step by step. The Bodhisatta's meditation technique was based on *ānāpāna*.

Body posture

If you follow *ānāpāna* as *samatha* practice, which physical posture is suitable? You must choose one of the following four physical postures. If you choose walking, there is motion and you have to look on the path and be careful not to bump onto something. If you are not looking on the path, you may stumble and slip. Thus, the mind cannot be stable and concentrate on the object. Therefore, the walking posture is not suitable for *ānāpāna*.

If you chose the standing position, you have to keep your body upright and protect it from falling. Your mind has to work more. If you practice in the laying position, before soon you will sleep. There is no effort and the mind becomes too comfortable. Therefore, the laying posture is also not suitable. In brief, to practice *ānāpāna*, the walking, standing and laying postures are not good; only the sitting posture, keeping the body upright, is suitable and stable.

When practising *ānāpāna*, we should follow this instruction of the Buddha: "*Pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā*", sit in cross-legged posture, and "*ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya*", keep the body upright. If you sit cross-legged, the body becomes motionless and more stable, not too comfortable and it does not take too much effort as in a walking or standing position. Men sit cross-legged and women may sit half cross-legged. This keeps the body upright.

Why should one keep the body upright? This is because there are many bones and joints in the back. In upright position, there is equilibrium and it does not take much effort to keep the joints straightened up. If you bend, tension in the muscles arises, pressure in the joints arises and backache comes into being. Therefore, the body, including the head, must be kept upright. In the text, it is instructed in detail how to sit.

Focus on the breath

Then, while sitting upright, focus with your mind on the *ānāpāna* object. You must be mindful of the object at the nostrils, where the breathing air touches. Persons are different; therefore, the breathing air touches for each person at a different spot. A person with a short upper lip might feel the breathing air at the tip of the nose; while a person with a protruding upper lip might feel the breathing

air at the tip of the upper lip. It means, wherever the breathing air touches, you must be mindful of it.

When doing *samatha* practice on the *ānāpāna* object, you should keep the inhalation and the exhalation regular. Some meditation masters, however, give instructions to breathe forcefully and fast in order to cultivate *samādhi* quickly. Such a method is not mentioned in the text, but some follow it anyway. Breathing hard and quickly causes tiredness. Therefore, you should breathe in and out in a regular and normal way. Relax your mind and body. Focus your mind on the object and keep calm. There should not be any tension. Keep the mind wherever the breathing air touches the face.

When we start concentrating, the first focus on the breathing object is called preliminary sign (*parikamma nimitta*). When that object appears clearly in the mind, it is called abstract sign (*uggaha nimitta*). In the end, the breathing object changes its form in the mind; the resembled sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) appears. Mental perception produces this sign. For some people the breathing air looks like two lines of smoke. For others it appears as a pearl rosary; for some as a small ball in motion on the tip of the nose. The sign appears differently in different persons because their perception is different.

By focusing on this *nimitta*, one continues the meditation practice and increases the power of

mental concentration. The mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) become suppressed or subjugated. Sensual desires become calm. Hatred on the object disappears. Mental restlessness and worry do not appear. Sloth and torpor are abandoned. There is no more doubt on the object. Such a mental state is called a state where mental hindrances are kept away. What keeps them away? It is the power of concentration that keeps the hindrances away. Concentration removes the other mental states that are the hindrances. No impurities come up and no *nīvaraṇas* come into being in the mind. The mind stays only with this sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*); the line of light or smoke.

After that, what happens? Keeping the mind on that *nimitta*, mental application (*vitakka*) works with that *nimitta* object. Application means the *dhamma* that puts the mind onto the object. If the mind is in touch with the object, has joined the object, it is called *vitakka*. Such a mental state clearly appears and it works very well. The mind continuously is in contact with that *nimitta* object. Then another mental state arises too, which is sustained application (*vicāra*). It looks like the binding of the mind to the object. It helps the mind not to go from the object; the mind is joined with the object; that is the power of *vicāra*. The next state is enjoyment of that *nimitta* object, which in *Pāli* is called *pīti*. By means of *pīti*, the mind is happy with the object. Both physically and mentally, one feels comfortable and one feels happiness. This is

sukha. There is no tension in the body or the mind. Just happiness appears in the mind.

Attainment of jhāna

Through the power of *samādhi*, the mind has only one object. All mental states have only the *nimitta* as object. In such an attainment, the application of the mind on the object is *vitakka*; the staying of the mind on the object is *vicāra*; the enjoyment of the object is *pīti*; the happiness with the object is *sukha*. The concentration upon one object is *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness) or *samādhi*. These five factors are called *jhāna* factors. They work harmoniously with the object. This is the state of the attainment of the first *jhāna*.

Having attained the first *jhāna*, the mind is far from sensual objects. It does not join the sense objects like pleasant visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes and tangible objects. *Jhāna* attainment is only possible when there is no desire for sensual pleasure. If the mind joins these sensual objects, *jhāna* attainment is impossible.

For example, a person who wishes to be on the other side of the river must abandon the bank on this side. Without abandoning this bank, he cannot reach the other bank. Therefore, whoever wants to attain *jhāna* must abandon sensual pleasure. In the text, it is said: "*Vivicceva kāmehi*", you must keep sensual pleasure away. Moreover, "*Vivicceva akusalehi*

dhammehi”, you must keep all types of unwholesome states away. In a *jhāna* stage, they become quiet; hatred (*dosa*) quiets, as well as conceit (*māna*), jealousy (*issā*) and stinginess (*macchariya*). All unwholesome mental states become quiet. What has happened on that stage? One feels rejoice and happiness, which is produced by keeping sensual pleasure away. This is “*vivekaja pītisukha*”; the joy and happiness that arise when sensual pleasure is abandoned.

In the world, the majority of people have moments of enjoyment caused by sensual pleasure; seeing beautiful visible objects, listening to pleasant sounds, smelling sweet smells, tasting nice food, touching of pleasant tangible objects – such enjoyment is the enjoyment of sensual pleasure. However, the enjoyment of *jhāna* is not like that at all. It overcomes all sensual pleasures and abandons them. The enjoyment appears with the *nimitta* object, like the line of light, the line of smoke, etc. Such a state is called *paṭhama jhāna*, the first *jhāna*.

Jhāna stages

The word *jhāna* has two meanings: burning down and firm concentration. When one attains the first *jhāna*, it burns mental impurities and hindrances down like fire. For example, if you burn paper, the fire burns down the paper. Like that, the *jhāna* burns

down the desire for sensual pleasure. The state of firm concentration is called *jhāna*.

The first *jhāna* is composed of the five *jhāna* factors: initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), joy (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*). After that, in the stage of the second *jhāna*, what factors are overcome? *Vitakka* and *vicāra* are overcome. Herein, *vitakka* does not apply the mind onto the object anymore, because through the power of *samādhi*, the mind automatically applies onto the object. Therefore, in the second *jhāna*, the mind remains with joy, happiness and concentration. When seeing the fault of joy, that it is a kind of emotion, joy is removed and the third *jhāna* stage is attained. In the third *jhāna*, the mind remains with two factors, happiness and concentration. Then, one dislikes any kind of emotion. Therefore, one removes happiness and instead of happiness (*sukha*), equanimity or indifferent feeling (*upekkhā*) comes into being. This is the attainment of the fourth *jhāna* stage. In that stage, the mind remains with two factors, indifferent feeling and concentration. When the fourth *jhāna* is attained, the mental power of *samādhi* has reached its highest level.

Supernormal knowledge

Through this power, what do we create? One can create different kinds of higher knowledge or supernormal powers (*abhiññā*). Only in the fourth

jhāna stage, various supernormal powers are possible. To attain such a state, one must work very hard. Repeated and prolonged practice is necessary.

Abhiññā is a supernormal power; it is not a supernatural power. It is said, for example, that one can get down into the earth or fly in the sky with *abhiññā*. However, these creations should be in accordance with natural phenomena. For example, if one wishes to walk on the surface of water, first, one must create a solid surface and then one can walk on the path. Otherwise, one will sink. This is nature. If one tries to get deep into the ground, one firstly has to create a hole in the earth, only after that one can enter. Nothing can be done contradictory to nature. *Abhiññā* is not a supernatural power. If one succeeds in *samatha* practice, it can be experienced.

Doing intensive *samatha* practice, one can stay focussed on the object the whole day. Not only one day, two days or three days, but as long as one reasonably wishes, one can stay in that state of concentration. The power of concentration protects the material body from pain. Therefore, suffering does not appear in the physical body. The entire physical body is light and in peace. Therefore, *jhāna* attainment is useful for living happily in the present life. The Buddha and the Arahants lived happily in their lives through this attainment.

This *samatha* practice is true and should not be blamed. Even the Buddha practiced *samatha*. The Arahants practiced *samatha* also and they attained *jhāna* repeatedly. Therefore, *samatha* is useful and should be practiced. However, you must not only follow *samatha* practice, because through *samatha* you cannot attain *Nibbāna*.

What is the destination of *samatha* practice? Its destination is *abhiññā* as result. If one does not loose *jhāna*, one will be born in the Brahma world. The first *jhāna* leads to the first *jhāna* plane, the second to the second *jhāna* plane, the third to the third, and the fourth to the fourth *jhāna* plane, accordingly.

Vipassanā practice

After succeeding in *samatha* and if one wants to attain *magga*, *phala* (path and fruition) and *Nibbāna*, one needs to change the meditation technique. One has to change from *samatha* to *vipassanā*.

How to change from *samatha* to *vipassanā*?

Firstly, one tries to attain *jhāna* on the *nimitta*. To switch to *vipassanā* one withdraws, emerges from the *jhāna* state. Then, one focuses on the concentrated mind itself, which had the *nimitta* as its object. The subject, the *jhāna* mind focussed on the *nimitta*, becomes then the object of contemplation. For example, when one is angry then one thinks about one's anger and one sees the angry mind. In such a

way it is possible. When one withdraws from *jhāna*, the mental state of *jhāna* still can be observed. Focusing on these *jhāna* mental states as object, one practises *vipassanā* meditation. *Vipassanā* is impossible on a concept object like the line of light. The mind that perceives the line of light must be the object of *vipassanā*. When the mind is object, it can become *vipassanā*.

In the beginning of *vipassanā*, there are two steps. The first step is to note mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*) by means of the individual characteristics of the object (*sabhāva lakkhaṇa*). That means that one must note the object through its individual characteristic. For example, if initial application (*vitakka*) is the object of *vipassanā*, one must note *vitakka* from its own individual characteristic. *Vitakka* is a mental state that puts the mind onto the object. If you note sustained application (*vicāra*), you see that *vicāra* keeps the mind on the object. If you note joy (*pīti*), you note that *pīti* is a mental state that rejoices in the object. If you note happiness (*sukha*), you realize it is a mental state with the nature of happiness. If you note concentration (*samādhi*), you note that it causes the mental states to concentrate on the object. These mental states have different individual characteristics. The ultimate reality (*paramattha dhamma*) should be noted by means of its individual characteristic.

For example, by focusing on hatred, one realizes the hatred: It is a mental state, which burns the mind

and destroys mental tranquillity. It is true; hatred (*dosa*) is a mental state that destroys the peaceful mind. Noting its nature, one realizes *dosa*. If craving (*lobha*) appears, one focuses on *lobha*. It is a mental state, which attaches to the mental object. In this way one realizes *lobha*. Each *dhamma* has its individual characteristic, *sabhāva lakkaṇa*. This is the first step, in which one sees all conditioned things (*nāma-rūpa*) through their individual characteristic.

In the second step, one sees all conditioned things through their universal characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*). The universal characteristics are the nature of impermanence (*anicca*), the nature of suffering (*dukkha*) and the nature of uncontrollability or non-self (*anatta*). When seeing *nāma-rūpa* as *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, it really becomes *vipassanā*.

Whoever follows this method of first *samatha* meditation and then *vipassanā* needs to start with *nāma* as object. On seeing *nāma* clearly, one then contemplates where the *nāma* appeared. By contemplation, the base of *nāma* comes into appearance. Focusing on the mental base matter, almost all matter can be perceived clearly. *Nāma* and *rūpa* both can be noted by the mind. One understands that *nāma* is different from *rūpa*, and that *rūpa* is different from *nāma*.

One clearly sees that *nāma* and *rūpa* are both impermanent. After arising, they fall. Depending on conditions, they appear and then disappear. The disappearance is forever, it never comes up again. The next appearance is depending on the next cause. In this way, this process of mentality and materiality runs continuously. It is impermanent (*anicca*). This nature of appearance and disappearance runs forever. All *nāma* and *rūpa* are instable. Due to instability, *nāma-rūpa* is unsatisfactory (*dukkha*). One has no power to control such changeability and suffering; it is *anatta*. Seeing *nāma-rūpa* in this way is called *vipassanā*.

Development of Vipassanā

Vipassanā, insight knowledge, develops in different stages. Each step represents the attainment of an insight knowledge.

The very first step is the knowledge that analyzes *nāma-rūpa* (*nāma-rūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*). The second stage is the knowledge that sees *nāma-rūpa* together with its cause and conditions (*paccayā parigaha ñāṇa*). The third step is the knowledge that sees *nāma-rūpa* and examines it as permanent or impermanent, as suffering or happiness, as controllable or uncontrollable. This repeated contemplation is called *sammasana ñāṇa*. In the fourth step, one sees *nāma-rūpa* rising and falling in the present moment (*udayabbaya ñāṇa*). In the fifth

step, one sees *nāma-rūpa* in the present moment only falling (*bhaṅga ñāṇa*). This is the highest level of seeing *anicca*.

After that, one's vision changes in different ways: One sees these *nāma-rūpa*'s as fearful (*bhaya ñāṇa*) and as dangerous (*ādīnava ñāṇa*). There is nothing to be enjoyed in *nāma-rūpa* (*nibbidā ñāṇa*). One wants to abandon *nāma-rūpa* (*muñcitu-kamyatā ñāṇa*). Then, one is reflecting about the way to abandon *nāma-rūpa* (*paṭisaṅkhā ñāṇa*). The last step is that one has equanimity seeing *saṅkhāra* (*saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*). *Saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa* is the highest *vipassanā* knowledge. Systematically it can be attained. From there, *vipassanā* leads to *magga*, *phala* and *Nibbāna*.

Whereas *vipassanā* leads to the end of *saṃsāra*, *samatha* only leads to *abhiññā* and after death to birth in the Brahma world.

Two vehicles

There are two techniques: *samatha* comes first, and then one changes to *vipassanā*. Or, without approaching *samatha* first, one can practice *vipassanā* directly. There are two vehicles (*yāna*); you can use either the *samatha* or the *vipassanā* vehicle. Whatever you like, you can choose: *Samatha* first, *vipassanā* second; or directly *vipassanā* without preceding *samatha*. Both these techniques are true. For example, if you want to see Shwedagon pagoda in Yangon, you

can access it from the Southern stairs, the Northern, Eastern or from the Western stairs. There are different ways to reach it, each way is true.

Samatha practice concentrates the mind on one object, and then the mind attains higher knowledge (*abhiññā*). *Vipassanā* practice leads to see *nāma-rūpa* as *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. The Buddha said: “*Dve me bhikkhave dhammā vijjā bhāgiyā*”, “Monks, these two *dhamma*’s lead to wisdom, the attainment of the insight knowledge of path. Therefore, through these two techniques one can eradicate all mental defilements.

Removal of craving and ignorance

If you follow the *samatha* technique, what happens? You can remove craving (*rāga*), the desire for the object. That is a great benefit. However, if you follow the *vipassanā* technique, you can realize the nature of *nāma-rūpa* through the characteristics of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. The knowledge increases through following the *vipassanā* meditation. By means of *vipassanā*, one can remove *avijjā* that conceals the truth.

In brief, *samatha* can remove *rāga* (lust, craving). *Rāga* causes suffering to arise. It is a mental state that desires for its object. *Rāga* ties the mind and causes to attract. Through *samatha* practice *rāga* is subjugated. *Samatha* practice concentrates the mind and can increase the power of *samādhi*. Through the

power of *samādhi*, *rāga* is abandoned. *Rāga* defiles the mind. With a defiled mind, one cannot find liberation. Attachment is then controlling one's mind. There is no escape from that, no exit. In the world, almost all people are the prey of *rāga* or the slave of *rāga*. Nobody can overcome *rāga*, all people are under the control of *rāga*. Most people cannot fight for freedom from *rāga*, but with *samatha* technique, one can fight against *rāga* and become free from it.

Then, let us consider *avijjā* or ignorance. When *avijjā* conceals what is happening, knowledge is unable to see the reality. *Avijjā* weakens the knowledge. By the technique of *vipassanā*, insight knowledge increases and one sees things as they really are. It removes ignorance (*avijjā*). If *avijjā* is removed, the power of knowledge increases. Through the practice of *vipassanā*, one can increase one's knowledge up to the highest level.

Samatha and Vipassanā on ānāpāna

Then, I want to explain *samatha* and *vipassanā* on only the *ānāpāna* object. You can use *ānāpāna* as an object for both *samatha* and *vipassanā*. If you directly want to follow *vipassanā* using the *ānāpāna* object, you must focus on the object in this way: In breathing, there are three points, breathing air, sensitive body where the breathing air touches, and body-consciousness. In *vipassanā* practice, you should note these three points. The breathing air is the air

tangible object, which is a type of matter. The sensitive body, where the air touches, is another type of matter. Body-consciousness appears due to the meeting of these two, air and sensitive body.

For example: You see a visible object with your eye. Depending on eye and visible object, eye-consciousness arises. On hearing a sound, depending on ear and sound, ear-consciousness arises. On smelling, depending on nose and smell, nose-consciousness arises. On tasting, depending on tongue and taste, tongue-consciousness appears. In the same way, it works for touching; depending on body and tangible object body-consciousness arises. In this *ānāpāna* object, the breathing air is the tangible object and the sensitive body is where the air touches. Due to the meeting of the two, body-consciousness arises.

The Buddha said: "*Kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭhabbesa uppajjati kāyaviññāṇam*", depending on body and tangible object body-consciousness arises. In this teaching on *ānāpāna*, first you should note the breathing air as tangible object. There is the sensitive body where the air touches. These two are material qualities. Depending on these two material qualities, body-consciousness has to arise. In these three points, breathing air and sensitive body are matter (*rūpa*); they do not have the nature of knowing an object, they are never aware of the object. It is body-consciousness alone that is mind (*nāma*). *Nāma* is aware of the object.

For example, there is a gas lighter. There are at least three conditions: the gas, the iron wheel, and the striking by someone. Due to the meeting of the three, the flame appears. In this way, mind is like a flame, it appears depending on base and object. Therefore, the mind cannot arise by itself just like the flame that cannot appear by itself. Only through the meeting of three things, gas, wheel and the striking finger the flame arises.

Another example: Let us say there is a harp. Three conditions are necessary to produce the sound: Harp body, a string and the finger that plays. Due to the meeting of the three, the sound appears. The sound cannot appear by itself; depending on three conditions, it appears.

In the same way in *ānāpāna*, the breathing air is matter that touches the nostrils. The nostrils are sensitive body. Depending on these two, body-consciousness appears. In that case, the breathing air and the sensitive body are material qualities (*rūpa*), body-consciousness that is aware of the touching, is mind (*nāma*). At that moment, only *nāma-rūpa* arises. One sees only *nāma-rūpa* as they really are. Such knowing is called analytical knowledge of mind and matter (*nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*). This is the first insight knowledge.

Then the knowledge increases step by step. One understands it more and more. Body-consciousness

does not appear before the meeting of these two, breathing air and nostrils. As soon as these two meet, body-consciousness comes into being. In that case, the breathing air and the sensitive body are the cause; body-consciousness is the effect. In the case of playing the harp, the harp body, the string and the playing fingers are the cause; the sound that appears is the effect. One can comprehend *nāma-rūpa* with their causes. This knowing is called 'knowledge of causality' (*paccayā pariggaha ñāṇa*). These two insight knowledges, analytical knowledge and knowledge of causality, are the foundation of *vipassanā*.

Becoming a small Sotāpanna

If you attain these two *ñāṇa*'s, analytical knowledge of mind and matter and the knowledge of causality, you become a true Buddhist. In the *Visuddhimagga* it is said that you must try to attain these two knowledges. If you attain them, you will become a small stream-winner (*cūḷa sotāpanna*).

Why will you be a small *Sotāpanna*? Because you do not have misperceptions about your being anymore. In ultimate sense, there is no being; only *nāma-rūpa* exists. This *nāma-rūpa* also arises depending on conditions. On seeing this, you have no doubt, you see this clearly and truly, therefore you are a *cūḷa sotāpanna*.

When you are born as a human being while the Buddha's teachings are available, you must try to

attain these two knowledges. Then, by increasing your knowledge, you can attain *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*, equanimity in seeing all conditioned things. This is the highest level of *vipassanā*. If *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa* becomes mature, you can find *Nibbāna* where all conditioned things (*saṅkhāra*) totally cease. People say, if the path ends, you will find a village. It is like that, if your *vipassanā* practice on the trail of *saṅkhāra* ends, you will find *Nibbāna*, the end of *saṅkhāra*.

Two essential practices

Let me say, these two techniques, *samatha* and *vipassanā*, are essential practices in the Buddha's teachings. It is important to follow them systematically and rightly. You can practice these two techniques at your home, wherever you are and whatever you are, lay person or renounced person. As far as you follow the practice, the effect will be accordingly. Do not look too much for the next life. If you follow the practice in this life, you can experience *jhāna* or *Nibbāna* respectively.

The *Dhamma* taught by the Buddha can be seen by oneself (*sandiṭṭhiko*) and has immediate effect (*akāliko*). There is no waiting list. However, you may attain results as far as your qualities (*pāramī*) permit.

Conclusion

Samatha subjugates the mental hindrances and makes the mind calm and tranquil. *Vipassanā* causes

to attain special seeing and knowledge. Therefore, while the Buddha's teachings are shining, you should try to follow these two techniques with understanding and confidence.

May you try successfully!

Sādhu – sādhu – sādhu!

- 5 -

Thought of Mind

Introduction

In general, people assume that mind and thought are similar. However, when one views the title of this discourse, it is obvious that the modes of action of mind and thought are different. And, when looking with *Abhidhamma* knowledge, one sees the distinction between the entity of mind, which is the awareness (*citta*) of an object, and the entity of the mental state (*cetasika*) which arises together with the *citta*. *Citta* and *cetasika* are two different entities in the natural law of ultimate realities. In the title 'The thoughts of Mind', 'thought' is the designation of a *cetasika*, a mental state. It refers to a particular *cetasika*, namely *vitakka*.

What is *vitakka*? In Myanmar, one may have heard, 'I can't sleep at night because of too much "*vitak*". The meaning of *vitakka* here is 'thought'. In

the Noble Eightfold Path, one of the eight path factors is *sammā saṅkappa*, where the meaning of *saṅkappa* is 'thought', and the meaning of *sammā saṅkappa* is right thought. *Saṅkappa* and *vitakka* are different words, but mean the same. *Vitakka* means thought, and it is said that our minds have thoughts. In this way, mind and thought should be seen as different entities. In the process of the purification of mind, we try to get rid of certain thoughts, while we try to let other thoughts arise and make them stronger.

Mind without thought

Not every mind is engaged in thoughts, but when one exclaims the existence of 'mind without thought', many people might not readily agree. They assume that the mind always has thoughts and there is no such condition as the mind without thought.

For example, there was a well-known teacher in the Buddha's life time who firmly believed that mind always has thoughts. This was Nigaṅṭha Nāṭaputta, whose doctrine is known as Jainism, it is still thriving in India. Nigaṅṭha Nāṭaputta once met a disciple of the Buddha known as the Wealthy Man Citta. Citta was wise and his reflections were of great intelligence (*paṭibhāṇa ñāṇa*). Nigaṅṭha Nāṭaputta asked him about the mind without thought. "Lord Gotama Buddha uttered that the thoughtless state of concentration (*avitakka avicāra samādhi*) exists. It is impossible that the thoughtless mind exists, as the

nature of mind is to have thoughts. What is your interpretation of this, Wealthy Man Citta? Do you also believe in the concentrated mind (*samādhi*) that is free from thoughts?" The Wealthy Man Citta answered, "I do not believe that the mind without thought exists".

Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta immediately raised his voice to the audience, "the Wealthy Man Citta admits that he does not believe in mind without thought." Citta then explained that he had practiced *samatha* meditation and had attained various *jhāna* stages. He repeatedly had experienced *samādhi* states in which no thoughts appear. Therefore, he said that he did not believe in such a state, because from his own experiences, he was aware that mind without thought exists.

Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta assumed that the Wealthy Man Citta was challenging him and said, "The Wealthy Man Citta is extremely crooked. First he said he did not believe it, and now that he was aware of it". Then Citta asked him whether the words belief and awareness had the same meaning or not. Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta was confused. However, belief and awareness are different; belief is not based on facts but on statements of others; awareness means one knows from one's own experience, which is more profound. Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta could not argue with this and left the conversation.

In *Abhidhamma*, the state of the mind without thought is known as *avitakka citta*. In total, there are 55 kinds of mind (*citta*) with thoughts and 66 kinds of mind without thoughts (*avitakka citta*); 121 kinds of mind altogether (including supramundane consciousness). There are two types of *avitakka citta*: 1) mind that is originally and by its nature free from thought and 2) mind that is '*bhāvanābala avitakka*'. This is the mind free from thoughts because of *bhāvanā*, meditation practice. Ten kinds of mind are naturally free from thought. These are the two consciousnesses that arise at the five sense doors (*dvipañcaviññāṇa*). It is the initial awareness of seeing the object of the eyes, hearing the sound by the ears, smelling the odour by the nose, tasting the taste by the tongue, and touch of the body. All other initial minds are bearing thoughts. Hence, a still and placid mind can exist, a mind free from any thought.

Wholesome thoughts and unwholesome thoughts

When there are thoughts in mind, these are appropriate or inappropriate, wholesome or unwholesome. Therefore, it is important to explore the nature of your thoughts, to know what kinds of thoughts are occupying the mind. After listening to this lecture, it will be clear how to get rid of inappropriate thoughts. The Buddha explained this in the *Dvedhāvitakka sutta* and the *Vitakkasaṅṭhāna sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya*). The Buddha put a lot of

emphasis on the matter of thoughts of human mind. It is very important because if the thought is rightly considered, it gives rise to the state of *sammā saṅkappa* (right thought) and this leads one to path knowledge and *nibbāna*. Therefore, we must know how to differentiate between right and wrong thoughts.

The presence of rightful, wholesome thoughts in the mind must be encouraged; wrongful, unwholesome thoughts must be abolished from the mind. Wrongful thoughts are those thoughts that have the effect of suffering. The rightful thought is free from fault, and brings about one's well-being.

First, I will elaborate on the wrongful thoughts. Because not doing the wrong thing is more important than doing what is right. When the Buddha showed the path, he first showed which way not to follow, and later he showed the right way. This is reasonable and practical. It is more important to know which way is wrong, as one will get into great trouble by going the wrong path. If one fails to follow the right way, one may face inconveniences but will not get into such great trouble. In the *Maṅgala sutta* for example, first it is stated '*asevanā ca bālānaṃ*', meaning 'not to associate with the foolish' and later it is stated with whom to associate. It is similar to poisonous food and other kinds of food. What is more important to know? Obviously, it is necessary to know which food is poisonous in order not to get into great danger.

Therefore, it is most important to warn for the things that inherently are dangerous.

Thoughts engaged in sense desire (kāmavitakka)

Let's think it over, what are the dangerous thoughts? They are *chandūpasañhita*, the thoughts concerning *lobha*. Thoughts arising from greed or desire will never be wholesome. Because all human beings have desires, one may think that thoughts, which are connected with *lobha*, might give good results. Actually, thoughts arising from *lobha* will bring more bad than good results.

In the word *kāmavitakka*, *kāma* is sense desire and *vitakka* is the associated thoughts. Thoughts with desire are common in the world. Thoughts involved in sensual pleasures too; the eye prefers to see beautiful things, the ear prefers to hear pleasant sounds, the nose prefers to smell nice scents, the tongue prefers to taste good foods, and the body prefers to feel sensual things. All kinds of little thoughts connected to sensual pleasure (*kāmaguṇa*) are said to be unwholesome. It is unwholesome because a mind that is filled with such thoughts is not able to attain insights or develop wisdom at the same time. All thoughts that are connected to sense desire block the mind. This state is the mental hindrance of sense desire (*kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa*). The thoughts tied to *lobha*, weaken the mind and prevent the arising of the wholesome thoughts. It also can bring about '*paññāya*

dubbali karaṇo', the state that weakens the power of the insight knowledge. To gain knowledge and wisdom in life is very important and since these thoughts can block the deliverance of knowledge, they are regarded as hindrance. Therefore, the thoughts connected to desirable objects or states, are seen as inappropriate thoughts and one should refrain from them.

If this type of thoughts is not controlled, the force of *lobha*, craving, will grow, envy becomes stronger as well as the desire to possess other peoples' property. Finally, a person might even consider committing a crime. Inappropriate thoughts reinforce greed considerably. More thoughts bring forth more greed, and if this is not stopped, the strength of *lobha* increases.

Therefore, these kinds of thought are said to be faulty or blameworthy (*sāvajja*) and they result in suffering, *dukkha vipāka*. *Dukkha* means here that one is facing difficulties, and this suffering is reinforced by those thoughts. One should not encourage nor get involved in thoughts produced by *lobha*. The sense of greed for material possessions; the favoritism in an individual relationship; any kind of thought which is based on *lobha* will bring forth the effect of suffering more than that of well-being.

Thoughts engaged in ill-will (byāpāda vitakka)

The next unwholesome thought is *dosūpasañhita*, the thought concerning ill-will (*dosa*). On careful examination within one self, one will find that the thoughts of ill-will and those connected to a clear mind, are not the same. Thoughts connected to *dosa* are far from generating mental peacefulness. Instead, one is thinking continuously about how to give another person a hard time. This kind of thought will never become a good thought and it is called *byāpāda vitakka*, thoughts of ill-will or malevolence.

Anger or hatred can have two types of objects: living beings and non-living things. Human mind is very strange; it can even be angry about lifeless things. When anger on lifeless things is added to 9 types of hatred (*āghāta*), we can say that there are 10 types of malevolence in total.

Human mind bears nine kinds of thoughts that sustain anger and accumulate grievances towards others. For easy memorizing, I will explain about all nine. They can be divided in three groups and three timeframes.

One might think about another person as follows: "This person has once ruined my well-being, he is continuing to do it now and he will certainly do the same to me in the future". Here, three thoughts induce hatred or ill-will. The same with reference to a friend: "This person has once ruined the prosperity of

my friend, he is continuing to do it now and he will do the same to my friend in the future". These thoughts also cause ill-will. Then with reference to an enemy: "Before, this person has helped my enemy to be prosperous, he is continuing to help my enemy now and he will certainly help my enemy in the future". In total, nine types of thought produce and sustain hatred and ill-will.

We have to be aware of these thoughts. The thoughts connected to *dosa* can lead to a permanent angry mind. The angry mind does not stop if one keeps on thinking like this. In humankind, most persons experience such kinds of thoughts connected to *dosa*, they are called the nine kinds of hatred (*āghāta*). This thinking can lead to hurting others.

The thought connected to *dosa* about non-living things is called '*aṭṭhānakopa*', misplaced anger. When people stumble over an obstacle, they might feel anger for that obstacle. When there is sunshine, they feel angry about it. When there is rain, they hate the rain. When they are burnt, they hate the fire. A person who is easily irritated, will be angry about everything he encounters. So, in total there are ten types of thoughts that sustain anger.

I will tell the story of a short-tempered male devotee. To sail upstream the Irrawaddy River, wind is required. One day there was no wind; therefore, he went ashore, pulled the boat with a rope and tied the

other end of the rope around his waist. Walking along the bank of the river, he dragged the boat against the current. This was not an easy task; it required a lot of energy. When he neared his village, a wind started to blow and gradually gained force. He became angry because only at reaching his destination, the wind began to blow. In anger, he jumped into his boat and sailed it in full speed upstream, thereby passing his village.

There was another incident, where a devotee was building a pavilion. The plates used for constructing the pavilion were blown away repeatedly by a strong wind, despite trying to force them down with heavy things. When that happened again and again, this man felt very angry about the breeze. He grabbed his knife and started to smash the wind.

This kind of anger is called '*aṭṭhānakopa*', misplaced anger. It arises because of thoughts engaged in ill-will (*byāpāda vitakka*). Therefore, one should refrain from this kind of thoughts.

Thoughts engaged in harming (vihimsā vitakka)

Thoughts of harming, *vihimsā vitakka*, have the underlying intention to make others suffer, to ruin others well-being, and to torture and kill others. Human mind is susceptible to these thoughts and they should be avoided. They are inappropriate thoughts and tend to bring suffering, not only for oneself, also to those who are object of these thoughts. There is no

way that these thoughts will bring a state of well-being. Therefore, these are wrong thoughts (*micchā vitakka*). To get rid of these thoughts, it is necessary to substitute them with the appropriate kinds of thought. In the way that darkness is substituted by light, the wrongful thoughts must be substituted by wholesome thoughts.

These are the three dangerous types of thought, thoughts engaged in sense-pleasures, in hatred and in harming. Next, I will explain the three types of thoughts that connect to wholesome states of mind.

Thoughts of renunciation (nekkhamma vitakka)

The opposite of thoughts of sense desire (*kāma vitakka*) are thoughts of renunciation (*nekkhamma vitakka*). It removes the thoughts about sensual pleasure such as the desire to see beautiful things with eyes, the desire to hear pleasant sound with ears, etc. These thoughts are free from sense desire and consider for example listening to *dhamma* talks, charitable works, observance of the precepts and meditation practice.

The thoughts of human beings are divers. There are for example people who think, "Today's movie is good, so I will watch the movie and shall not go to listen to the *Dhamma* talk", and there are people who think, "no matter how good today's movie program is, I will not fail to attend the ceremony of the *Dhamma*

talk". This example obviously reveals different kinds of thoughts.

A person who attends a lecture on *Dhamma* might attain the higher knowledge instantly, while listening. All of you may have clear ideas on how wholesome thoughts can bring well-being. Wholesome thought does not find solace in *kāmaguṇa* objects; to the contrary, it ignores objects of sensual pleasure and finds comfort in doing good deeds. When these kinds of thought are present, one can attain 'anavajja', a faultless and clear state of mind that causes happiness. In addition, one can acquire *sukhavipāka*, the enjoyment of the resultant well-being and happiness. Therefore, thoughts of renunciation are rightful, wholesome, thoughts.

Thoughts of renunciation usually appear side by side with states of *alobha*, the opposite of *lobha*. They can remove *lobha*, craving. When one is involved in thoughts connected to *alobha*, one will think of doing charitable works, helping others, wishing to give away one's property and wanting to share things with others. There is generosity and desire to perform wholesome deeds. Wholesome thoughts like these are *nekkhamma vitakka*.

Thoughts of non-hatred (*abyāpāda vitakka*)

The next wholesome thoughts to consider are thoughts of non-hatred (*abyāpāda vitakka*). These are thoughts of loving kindness (*mettā*). Thoughts that

engage hatred and the expression of anger will have a negative effect on humans and on non-living things. Thoughts free from hatred and ill-will consider the well-being of other creatures and are associated with a desire to help those who are in trouble. Thinking like this will certainly appease one's mind.

When the thought are connected to loving kindness, the benefit is also for others. They also enjoy the thoughts directed to the well-being of all living creatures. When loving kindness is felt deeply in the heart and when it is expressed to others, one experiences well-being and happiness. The Buddha said that by always having the rightful thoughts in mind, one invariably comes to speak the truth only, and becomes involved in carrying out good deeds only. Therefore, one becomes free from faulty deeds and enjoys the result of well-being (*sukhavipāka*). These benefits will also be enjoyed by the ones with whom one is associated. This kind of thought is fit to be involved in.

Thoughts of non-harming (avihiṃsā vitakka)

Then there is thought that is connected to non-harming (*avihiṃsā vitakka*). These are the thoughts that arise with compassion (*karuṇā*). This kind of thought has no intention to be ruthless to others or to see others get in trouble. This kind of thought does not oppress others; it reflects on how others can be free from suffering. It considers how to encourage and

help others who are in trouble or are depressed. It ponders for example on how to distribute food to those who are starving. These kinds of thoughts are the thoughts associated with compassion (*karuṇā*).

Without doubt, a person having such kind of thought will help others. In the world, the desires to help others are caused by thoughts of non-harming. Helping each other; helping disaster victims who lost everything in a fire, helping the victims of floods, helping the victims of a cyclone; these actions are due to thoughts like these.

In all, there are three kinds of inappropriate thoughts that we should refrain from, and there are three kinds of appropriate thoughts that we should cultivate in our minds. If inappropriate thoughts become clear in one's mind, it is necessary to remove them, otherwise they become stronger. Then unwholesome conditions will arise, with the result of suffering. Therefore, the unwholesome and wrongful thoughts must be abandoned from the mind and substituted by wholesome thoughts.

The Vitakkasaṅṭhāna sutta

In the *Vitakkasaṅṭhāna sutta*, the Buddha explains the way to control the thoughts. This is not that easy, as the thoughts of mind have a tendency towards the faulty side. The Buddha, however, shows five ways to shake off the wrongful thoughts. Although the Buddha mentioned these primarily for

individuals who practiced *samatha* meditation, the method can be used by anyone who wishes to control the mind and protect oneself from unwholesome thoughts.

In general, the way to free the mind from unwholesome thoughts pertains mainly to the mind that is engaged in *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha* (craving, hatred and ignorance). The thoughts involving *lobha* are often recognized as such, also the thoughts connected to *dosa* are mostly obvious. The thoughts connected to *moha*, however, are less clear. *Moha*, or ignorance, misinterprets wrongdoing as the right thing to pursue, and the proper action as something to be avoided. These are typical characteristics of thought based on *moha*. These thoughts are more dangerous, because one is deluded and does not know right from wrong.

Thoughts that are based on *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* are dangerous, for oneself and for others. How to remove these thoughts? The Buddha showed five ways.

Solving the problem by changing the object

The first method is to change the object. When the mind becomes obsessed with faulty thoughts, we should not continue with this kind of thinking but change the object from unwholesome to wholesome. How to carry this out properly?

To explain this clearly, first it should be noted that there are two kinds of attachment, attachment to living beings and attachment to non-living things. With the first one, one tends to develop a *saṃyojana* (fetter) and is about to cling to someone. The thoughts are becoming obsessed because of attachment. For example, mother loves her offspring and attaches to her children; people love and befriend each other or people attach to pets, such as little dogs and cats.

The other kind of attachment is the tendency to cling to property. For example, jewelry with an exquisite design can be valued so much that it is kept untouched and unused. The same goes for new fashionable clothes. In these instances, one is becoming obsessed with material properties because of *lobha*. Some people are attached to property even to the extent that they dislike it when other people touch it. They feel stingy because of this attachment to *saṅkhāra*, conditioned things.

How to remove craving for living beings?

How to remove the thoughts engaged in attachment to living beings? The Buddha advised to change the object of one's thoughts. This can be done by *asubha kammaṭṭhāna*. To use this method means, for example, that one considers ugliness and loathsomeness of the person one is attached to. Instead of thinking about the beauty of the person,

one thinks about the ugliness. This kind of thought can override the previous - burning - thoughts.

For instance, one should examine the details of this attachment; whether it is to the hair or to the soft hairs of the skin or to the hand nails or toenails. In this way, the whole body is examined by using 32 body parts meditation (*koṭṭhāsa*). When doing this systematically, one will find that the physical form as a whole will gradually disappear. Hair, soft hair, hand nails, toenails, teeth, skin, nerve, bone, bone marrow; when every piece of the body is scrutinized, one will find there is nothing worthy of attachment. When there is a tendency of attachment to someone, this method should be used to remove it.

If this way fails to abolish the attachment, the heat of the *saṃyojana* (fetter) fire will surely increase. In the world, it is said that *kāmatanḥā*, (craving for a sense object) is the hottest kind of fire. This is the fire which burns deep inside one's heart, where no fireman can reach it and put it out. These kinds of fire can danger a person to the extent that it totally ruins one's life, or drives one to commit suicide. Therefore, one should be extremely cautious for this kind of fire. However, the Buddha gave the remedy to extinguish the fire.

Once, during the Buddha's lifetime, there was a young monk known as Vangīsa. As he walked around the city to collect alms, he broke the rule to keep the

eyes cast down and lifted his eyes without controlling his eye-faculty (*cakkhundriyaṃ*). He saw a woman and felt attraction in his mind towards her. He considered the thought connected to desiring her. When that thought was about to arise, he guarded himself with mindfulness. He considered, "this thought is going to trouble me". Foreseeing this, he went to his teacher venerable Ānanda and asked, "My Lord, the *raga* (lust) flame is burning inside me, what shall I do to put it out?" Suppose that if he had not been aware of that danger, then he would have faced *dukkha* (trouble). But he admitted that his heart was burning and asked how he should extinguish the fire.

Venerable Ānanda replied, "You are suffering like this because you have a wrong perception". He had wrongful thought. Here it meant that something ugly was seen as beautiful. To eradicate the craving, it should be interpreted as not beautiful and as loathsome.

To become aware of how much one's own body is detestable, one should scrutinize it carefully. The moment a person wakes up in the morning, one has to go to the toilet, wash the face, brush the teeth and empty the bowel. Nothing in the digestive system is supposed to be stored; nothing that leaves the body is worthy to hold on to. Nevertheless, people continually grow attachments to their own body. At the same time, however, everyone has to excrete the body wastes in a secret manner.

The meaning of *asubha kammaṭṭhāna* is considering the filthy things. Let us consider the occasion that people are having dinner. They eat happily together with family and friends, wearing makeup and nice suits or dresses. When the stomach is full and the food is ready to be excreted why don't at least two or three people go to the toilet together? This stage of digestion, the excretion, is repulsive.

Before a kind of food is put into the mouth, it is regarded as clean. But after having been in the mouth, nobody wants to eat it anymore. Only the toddlers may eat it. Any grown-up will refuse it because it is detestable.

Paṭikkūla saññā means urging a person to perceive the ugliness in things like these. Another clear example is that we swallow saliva all the time. However, when it is spit in a glass and if one is asked to drink it back, no one will drink it. Anything when removed from the body becomes *asubha*, loathsome.

Let us look at the hair on our head. When it is intact on the head, it is treasured; it is dyed in many colours, done in fashionable ways. But when a strand is seen on a plate with food, what will be the reaction? On the head it is treasured, but when it is elsewhere, it obviously becomes detestable. Considering the nails, we see the same pattern. When attached to fingers, the nails are kept with great care and polished in many colours. But when they are cut, they become

detestable. Nevertheless, the nail on the finger and the one that is cut are the same. But their image becomes different in human mind. In the mind the object changes.

When one feels attachment to someone, the escape from it is to change the object. The Buddha explicated that it is of great importance to remove the wrongful thoughts about the attachment. Thought that considers beauty should be replaced by thoughts of non-beauty or ugliness. Then, *lobha* will withdraw, the fire of *lobha* which was burning inside a person, will vanish and the mental state will come to a rest. This is the remedy.

When one is physically sick, one takes medicines. When the mind is sick, it requires a remedy too. In other countries, mental problems are often treated through psychotherapy, by psychotherapists or psychiatrists. The method of the Buddha gives a remedy for the mind, not only by providing conversation treatment, but by giving the complete cure. It is the Buddhist way of psychotherapy. The wrong thought is substituted by the right thought by changing the object.

When a person is aware of and considers *lobha*, another object can substitute the object of craving. That changes the thoughts in mind and brings release.

In the previously mentioned case, venerable Ānanda urged the young monk Vangisa to develop his

mind and change the object to foulness '*asubhāya cittan bhāvehi*'. In that way, he would be able to extinguish *kāmarāga*, the fire that was burning inside him, and to appease his mind. This is the way to solve the problem when a person engages, more or less obsessively, in thoughts because of lust and attachment to living beings.

How to remove craving for non-living things?

What about thoughts arising with *lobha* for non-living things (*saṅkhāra*)? For example, when a person has a strong attachment to jewellery, clothes, house or property, and feels a growing sense of *lobha*. The Buddha expounded that one should engage in thoughts about the impermanent nature of things and consider that also their usefulness is transient. No matter how good the quality of the clothes is, when they are worn it has gone; when the most beautiful flowers are put in a vase, they won't last long. Thinking that way, the strength of the fetter (*saṃyojana*) will certainly decrease. The worries that others might touch one's property will also disappear, knowing that the property is not going to last anyway.

Thinking on the nature of transience is *tāvakālika*, the nature of impermanence is *anicca*. One will realize that the flower will not last forever and will droop soon. By bearing such kinds of thought in mind, one removes the undesirable attachment to things and finds no reason for not daring to touch,

wear or eat them. The object changes to impermanence. This is the way to remove thoughts of attachment to non-living things.

How to remove hate for living beings?

Sometimes hatred and its associated thoughts spontaneously appear in the mind. When the hate is directed to living beings, the Buddha urged people to develop *mettā* to others. One must prepare the mind to harbour willingness about the well-being of others and to extinguish the fire of *byāpāda* (hatred, ill-will) that is burning inside the heart. One must develop patience, forgiveness and *mettā* in one's mind.

It is not easy to radiate *mettā* and it is quite difficult to abolish the hateful mind. In another *sutta*, the Buddha showed a way to cure the mind with very strong hatred. First, one must develop *mettā* and when this fails, one develops *karuṇā*, compassion. If this fails, one should consider that this happens because of one's *kamma* and its related effects. Awareness in the mind about this can be developed in this way: "he has been carrying his own *kamma* and I have been carrying my own *kamma*, so the hatred between us is nothing; if he carries good *kamma* he will prosper and likewise, if I carry good *kamma*, the same effect will occur to me."

If this attempt still does not work out, one must try to forget everything. The final resolve is to erase the whole thing from the mind. The sense of hatred

must disappear, so that the thoughts of ill-will in the heart are removed.

How to remove hate for non-living things?

Hatred for non-living things can sometimes appear in a human mind. For example, the nearby big tree becomes a nuisance when its leaves fall on the ground and one has to sweep frequently. If this is the case, the Buddha instructed to examine the basic properties of such a thing (*dhātumanasikāra*). All things are made up of materiality, and materiality consists of the four great elements. One has to find out whether one has thoughts of hatred on *paṭhavi* (solidity), or *āpo* (fluidity) or *tejo* (heat).

Then, these basic qualities, as the object of hatred, can be roughly searched for. You will find out that it cannot really be located anymore and in this process, the source of the hatred even seems to disappear. Try to practice it, and see if it is true. When the thoughts of hatred have a non-living thing as object, it should be removed through this method.

How to remove ignorance (moha)

Concerning thoughts connected to *moha*, ignorance, the great teachers of *Aṭṭhakathā* (a commentary) have listed 'the five ways' to remove ignorance and to develop wisdom.

1. One should approach the well experienced and respectable teachers. A person filled with *moha*

considers things one is supposed to do as inappropriate and things one is not supposed to do as appropriate. An ignorant person should approach the good teacher in order to become free from ignorance.

2. After approaching the good teacher, one should learn from him by listening to his teaching.
3. To decide easily on how to apply the knowledge that is learned, one should ask questions to have a clear explanation of the meanings.
4. One should listen to *Dhamma* talks at appropriate times.
5. One is recommended to consider carefully and in detail the cause of things.

By following these five advises, ones knowledge will increase. Only when a person becomes educated, *moha* will disappear. The way to remove *moha* is by acquiring *pañña*, wisdom, only wisdom can solve the problem.

These are the methods used to find the escape of unwholesome thoughts by changing the object.

The next four methods to control thoughts of mind

The second method is that when thoughts are imbued with *lobha*, *dosa* or *moha*, one should consider

the evil and unwholesome nature of one's thoughts or the evil nature of the mind that bears such thought.

Suppose a person engages in thoughts about sense desire or hatred. His mind is trying to find faults in others. Then, he must be aware that these kinds of thoughts lead to suffering and gets one into trouble and that it destroys the well-being of others. These thoughts are dreadful and one can consider them as follows: "This unwholesome thought have arisen. I myself might get into trouble because of these thoughts. Also, others may get into trouble because of these thoughts". By doing this, restraint of the thoughts will happen and the thoughts will find their way out. The wrongful thoughts will spontaneously subside. To experience this, you have to put it into practice.

The first method is changing the object, the second method is contemplating the evil effects of unwholesome thoughts. The third method the Buddha gave, is forgetting. It means to eliminate the wrongful thoughts from the mind and not to consider them again. If the thought is difficult to get rid of, one should totally stop to think about it. The thought should be forgotten. No energy should be put in the thinking of the thought and it should be made to disappear completely from the mind. This is the third method.

The fourth method is to search the original source of the thought. The original source of the thoughts connected to *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha* and aggressive manners should be found out. In the process of searching, one will find the escape; the existing thought that engages the mind will disappear. This, you can experience yourself too.

If the previous means; (1) changing the object, (2) contemplating the evil effects, (3) forgetting, and (4) finding its original source, all failed, then the fifth and final method the Buddha gave can be used. One should do as follows. Try with great effort to forcefully suppress the mind and substitute it with another mind. One should never give up and continue to try hard until the problem of thinking the wrong thoughts is solved. As the Buddha said: "one shall try stoically and with gritting teeth". The problem of thinking the wrong thoughts shall be solved with gritting teeth.

People usually grit their teeth when they become irritated. The Buddha instructed to push the tongue up to the palate and make a clicking sound. Then with firm determination, such as "this should not be happening to me", one removes the bad thoughts by suppressing them forcefully with another mind. This was explicated by the Buddha in the *Vitakkasaṅṭhāna sutta*.

The beneficial effects of controlling the thoughts

In sum, unwholesome thoughts can be removed by using these five methods: (1) by changing the object, (2) by contemplating the evil effects, (3) by forgetting, (4) by finding the original source, and (5) by forcefully suppressing the thought with the mind.

By using these five methods, the mind will become free from wrongful thoughts and a person will be able to gain power in controlling his thoughts. This power enables one to consider and reflect on any kind of thought, and to control any thought that one does not want to think. This is wholesome and beneficial.

In daily life, one considers and knows that the thought is not beneficial, but sometimes one cannot stop thinking in that way. For example, a person who is afraid of ghosts always thinks that at night ghosts are coming. He nurtures these frightening thoughts that make him scared. These thoughts are uncontrollably appearing in his mind. He cannot sleep, becomes anxious, has to sweat and covers himself with a blanket. He suffers from the effect of wrongful thoughts.

If a person is engaged in unwholesome thoughts and is able to overcome the situation by eliminating them, then one acquires power over the thoughts and in the mind. In addition, one can think whatever thought one wants to think and one will be able to

stop thinking whenever one does not want to think. This can be achieved by practice.

When one has achieved this skill, one can remove any attachment (*taṇhā*) and make oneself free from fetters (*saṃyojana*). Also, conceit (*māna*), thoughts around oneself, will be controlled. These three factors in the mind result in *dukkha*. With the removal of these three factors, a person becomes free from all kinds of suffering. All kinds of *dukkha* encountered in human life will thereby come to an end.

Conclusion

The thoughts of mind, the mind with and without thought, or with wholesome and unwholesome thought are to be considered.

May you, dear audience, by considering the mind rightly and by removing the unwholesome thoughts through the five methods, all be able to have control over your own thoughts. And may each and every one of you thereby be able to successfully end all states of *dukkha*.

Sādhu - sādhu - sādhu!

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Live with a Heart of Loving Kindness

A good start of the New Year

Today is the beginning of a new year¹. In the *Kakacūpama sutta*, or the discourse of "The simile of the saw", the Buddha says that every day, until the end of our life, we should live with a heart imbued with loving kindness (*mettā*). If we cultivate *mettā* in our hearts, we can keep the entire world in peace.

When considering today's world, we can see that on a global level loving kindness becomes dryer. Scientists say that the warming of the world is caused by a reduction of the ozone layer. Actually, we can say that the burning of the world is caused by hatred in the mind. Greed and hatred in the mind affect the world not only because of aggression also because of an increase of consumption and stress.

¹ This *Dhamma* talk was given on January 1st, 2009.

To make our mind peaceful we need to cultivate *mettā*, loving kindness, in the heart. In this *sutta*, the Buddha clarifies the power of *mettā*.

Generally, people communicate by way of speech. Talking helps to understand each other, but when our speech is not proper, when we talk in a wrong way and with unwholesome intentions, it causes many problems such as anger and conflict. Therefore, for a good start of this New Year we can consider how we talk with each other in daily life.

Five guidelines for proper speech

The Buddha gave advice on how to talk appropriately. This advice is summarized in five guidelines:

1. "*Kālena vakkhāmi no akālena*". This means, "I shall talk at a suitable time, not at an unsuitable time".

2. "*Bhūtena vakkhāmi no abhūtena*". "I shall talk truly, not falsely". When we talk, it must be true, not untrue or false. Many people talk both truthfully and falsely. However, we should always speak the truth and never lie, the Buddha said.

3. "*Sanhena vakkhāmi no pharusena*". "I shall talk gently, not harshly". Besides truthfully, we should also talk in a polite and gentle way, not harshly or rude. Many people speak gently only when they are happy. Then words as "sweetie" or "honey" are used. However, when angry, people use abusive words like

"bloody hell". The Buddha advises us to always talk gently and to avoid rude speech.

4. "*Atthasamhitena vakkhāmi no anattasamhitena*". "I shall talk beneficially, not uselessly". Many people talk illogically, about irrelevant matters or about matters that are not of their concern. Whenever we talk, we should try to speak in a beneficial, logical and relevant way. "My speech is never useless, illogical or irrelevant", the Buddha said.

5. "*Mettācitto vakkhāmi no dosantarā*". This means, "I shall talk with *mettā*, not with anger". The Buddha recommends that we always talk with kind words, regardless of the circumstances. We should always talk with *mettā*, with loving kindness, and never with anger or hatred.

We must try to follow these guidelines of the Buddha whenever we communicate with each other. You can make intentions for yourself, according to these guidelines, in this way: "I shall speak at a suitable time. I shall speak what is true and I shall speak gently. I shall speak what is beneficial and I shall speak with loving kindness."

These guidelines protect us, and if we follow them, problems will not arise. Most problems arise because of unsuitable talking. Also, chatting, backbiting and divisive speech lead to anger, quarrel and problems. The mouth is for eating and for talking.

However, you should not eat everything. We must only eat suitable food.

In former times, there were gentlemen who even advised not to speak at all when angry, because anger never produces good results and never produces politeness.

In society, there are people who have good discipline, who are thoughtful and watch their mind. And there are people who are not well disciplined. If you follow the world of thoughtless speech, the problems will not end. Hatred and conflict will continue. Therefore, the Buddha said that you must live with a heart of loving kindness. No matter what the other says, you should respond with loving kindness.

This advice is in various ways expressed in the *Kakacūpama sutta*, or the discourse of "The simile of the saw". In brief, the *sutta* goes as follows:

Simile of the saw

In the time of the Buddha, there was a monk with the name Phaggunā. Actually, he was called Moliya Phaggunā, because when he was a layman, he had a big knot of hair on top of his head. Moliya means big hair knot, hence the name Moliya Phaggunā.

When he became a monk, he was quite friendly with the nuns. A problem arose, because when any monk spoke unpleasant about the nuns in his

presence, he became angry and started to quarrel. In the same way, if someone blamed him in presence of the nuns, they were displeased and started a dispute with the monks who spoke badly about him. The problem was clearly caused by communication. The Buddha summoned Moliya Phagguna and admonished him to respond only with loving kindness and to speak no evil words.

Lady Vedehikā

Then, the Buddha told the true story of Vedehikā, a rich lady in Sāvatti. She was well known for her gentleness and good heartedness. The lady was very happy and no one ever saw her angry. She had a house maid, named Kali, who was clever and skilful in her work and well organized. The rich lady Vedehikā was satisfied with Kali's work. Then Kali contemplated the good-heartedness of the lady. Was the lady always kind, or was here good-heartedness due to the good works of Kali? Kali decided to clarify the question. The next morning she got up late and did not prepare food. When the lady checked Kali's work, nothing was done. Then the lady went to Kali and asked, "Why do you get up so late, what is wrong with you?" Kali replied "Nothing". The lady only frowned. Kali noticed it and thought, "Anger is actually present in her, it is just because I do my work well that my mistress shows no anger". She continued to test the lady further.

The next morning she got up later and the lady asked, "What has happened, what is wrong with you?" Kali again said "Nothing". Then the lady said angrily, "Maid, I will teach you a lesson if you go on like this". The next morning Kali got up even later. Then the lady asked angrily "Why do you get up so late, what is the matter?" "Nothing", replied Kali. Then the lady took an iron stick and she hit Kali's head with it. Then, with her head bleeding, Kali went to the neighbours and denounced her mistress, "She the rich lady, the good-hearted lady, she beats me. Look what she has done to me!" The neighbours then said, "Oh, the rich lady is merciless and so violent. Why does she beat her maid?" Soon, many people blamed the rich lady for maltreating her housemaid.

The Buddha explained: "*Bhikkhus*, there are some monks who are very gentle and very peaceful as long as they are spoken to in a kind and gentle way. However, when they encounter harsh or rude speech, their real gentleness can be known."

From this story, we can see that good news slowly builds up and bad news travels fast. With this story, the Buddha advises us to train ourselves to have a good heart always, independent of the goodness of others.

To control the angry mind

The Buddha has given a way to learn to control the angry, hateful mind. We have to be mindful of the next four steps:

To still the mind you have to make a firm intention: "My mind should not change when the other makes me angry".

Do not respond with harsh speech if you cannot control your anger.

If someone makes you angry, respond with loving kindness, *mettā*, towards this person.

Cultivate and develop loving kindness, *mettā*, especially towards the person who made you angry. After that, radiate *mettā* towards all living beings.

What is mettā?

Mettā means literally the spirit of a friend. A mind fully imbued with *mettā* is free from two enemies. The first one is internal, it is *dosa* (ill-will) in the mind; the other one is external, it is another person as an enemy. The first enemy is *dhamma, akusala vera* (unwholesome hostility) and the other enemy is a person, *puggala vera* (a hostile person). Out of these two enemies, *mettā* is especially a protection from *akusala*, from *dosa* in the mind. It does not protect from the hostile person as an enemy; regarding this enemy not much can be done. You only can learn to control *dosa* in the mind, in all

circumstances. You cannot control other persons. If a person uses harsh speech to you and you respond with harsh speech yourself, you yourself will turn into an enemy; not only of that person but also of yourself.

However, when you cultivate and develop *mettā* towards all sentient beings, there is no internal enemy. Not any being should be excluded from your *mettā* and in that way, the loving kindness becomes limitless. If someone develops *mettā bhāvanā* (*mettā* practice), his or her mind becomes unshakable. His or her mind does not get upset by harsh words or by anything else.

Mettā makes the mind stable

The Buddha explained the stability of the mind with several images.

The earth is so stable that no one can make the earth to disappear. One can dig in the earth, spit on it, urinate on it. The earth does not react; it stays there as if equanimous. Likewise, a mind with loving kindness is so great; it cannot be affected or destroyed by unwholesomeness. You should cultivate equanimity with *mettā*, to develop a mind as stable as the earth.

A big river is just there, no one can bend the river; no one can put the river on fire with a torch. The river stays cool and keeps on flowing. You must

cultivate your *mettā* in order to develop a mind as cool as a big river.

The empty space cannot be formed or coloured. No painter can draw a picture on the space. You must make your *mettā* stronger, in order to become a mind as immense as the empty space. When *mettā* is established, when your heart is full of *mettā*, no anger or hostility can arise in the same way as it also cannot affect the empty space.

In the *sutta* of the simile of the saw, the Buddha said to his disciples, "The one, who reacts with anger toward another person, is not my disciple. Even when this person cuts you into pieces with a double-handled saw." So, even when someone hurts you badly, you do not react with anger. It is like what Jesus Christ said; if someone hits your face, you turn the other cheek. You can do this if your mind is full with *mettā*. Do not react with anger or hatred.

We should follow the Buddha's advice and associate with beings that are full of *mettā*. If you have a chance to speak to these persons, you should follow their way of practice.

Conclusion

Cultivate *mettā* in your heart, as strong as and as stable as possible. In this way, your mind becomes unshakable and anger cannot arise anymore. It will bring about your welfare and happiness.

Therefore, I conclude this talk with the wish:
May you all live with a heart imbued with loving
kindness towards all sentient beings.

Sādhu - Sādhu - Sādhu!

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Mettā Bhāvanā

How to develop loving kindness

Introduction

Today, I want to talk about *mettā bhāvanā*, the mental development of loving kindness.

There are three enemies within us. They are craving (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). These three are the roots of all evil mental states. They fortify unwholesome states in our minds (*akusala dhammas*) through the energy of *hetu-paccayā* (root condition). Of the three *akusala dhammas* (unwholesome states), *moha* always accompanies either *lobha* or *dosa*. When *lobha* arises, *moha* always appears with it. When *dosa* arises, *moha* also accompanies it. However, *moha* sometimes arises with neither *lobha* nor *dosa*.

Burning mind

When one of these three unwholesome states (*akusala dhammas*) occupy our mind, we know

nothing of good or bad. We easily commit any offence, often without knowing. Craving, anger and delusion are great enemies in the world, as they are very powerful in destroying beings. The Buddha compared these three states of mind to fire. They burn beings almost all the time. When we are in fire because of craving, anger or hatred and delusion, we must try to extinguish these three fires. We can extinguish the fire of *lobha* through *asubha bhāvanā* (meditation on the foulness of the body); the fire of *dosa* through *mettā bhāvanā*; and the fire of ignorance or *moha* through the development of *pañña* (wisdom).

Of these three phenomena, anger or hatred (*dosa*) is a great destroyer in the world. Hatred proliferates hatred. One's hatred prompts hatred in another. An angry face cannot soften another's heart. "Hatred never ceases through hatred", the Buddha said. Because of *dosa*, people kill themselves or they kill others. As the Buddha said:

"*Kuddho hi pitaram hanti.*"

- An angry person commits patricide. -

"*Hanti kuddho sa-matavam.*"

- An angry person commits matricide. -

"*Kuddho hi Brahmanam hanti.*"

- An angry person kills an Arahant. -

"*Hanti kuddho pathujjanam.*"

- An angry person kills any individual. -

People love themselves more than they love others. "*Atta sāmam pemaṃ natti.*" - There is no one as much loved as oneself. - Although one loves oneself more than one loves others, one is able to commit suicide, owing to *dosa*. Therefore, *dosa* is the root cause of killing. We must expel this *dosa*, we must get rid of anger and hatred. How do we do it? "*Mettā* must be developed to eradicate *dosa*", the Buddha said¹. So, let us look deeper into *mettā* and the way to develop *mettā* in our hearts.

What is mettā?

Mettā is the mental state of loving kindness. It is *adosa*. *Adosa* is the opposite of *dosa*, not the mere absence of *dosa*. *Adosa* accompanies all beautiful consciousnesses (*sobhana cittas*), it is one of the three wholesome roots (together with *alobha*, non-attachment, and *amoha*, wisdom). This means that when there is *mettā*, the mind is wholesome.

In what sense is it mettā?

"*Mitte bhava mettā.*" It is *mettā*, when it is like the feeling of love for a friend. We have our friends, which we respect and appreciate. This spirit of love is called *mettā*, loving kindness. *Mettā* is of a different nature than *rāga* (lust, passion). *Rāga* is an unwholesome mental state, while *mettā* is a wholesome mental state. *Rāga* has the nature of

¹ "*Mettā bhāvetabba dosassa pahānan ga.*"

attachment. This is unlike *mettā*, for the nature of loving kindness is detachment. *Mettā* is free from attachment or passion.

Rāga brings about one's sorrow in the end, whereas *mettā* always brings about one's happiness. *Rāga* creates bad results, while *mettā* creates good results. One becomes selfish through *rāga*, and through *mettā* one becomes unselfish. One thinks about oneself through *rāga*; one thinks about others through *mettā*. *Rāga* softens one's heart and then the heart saddens. Whereas *mettā* softens one's heart and then makes it peaceful.

Mettā further defined

Mettā has a specific characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause. Through these four points, we can understand and see *mettā* clearly. When *mettā* arises, it has as characteristic the wish for the welfare of all beings. Its function is acting for the welfare of other persons. Its manifestation is removal of hatred and ill-will. Its proximate cause is seeing beings as lovable.

What is the object of mettā?

Mettā's object is one being or many beings. A person or a being is not a reality but it is a concept, a name. This is *satta paññatti*: the person or a being is a concept and this concept is the object of *mettā*. So, when practicing *mettā bhāvanā*, the object is a person.

The Buddha taught that there are 40 meditation objects possible. The order in which *samādhi* is developed is very much the same for most objects. When practicing *samatha* meditation with *mettā's* object, then *mettā's* object has two signs: at the start there is the preliminary sign (*parikamma nimitta*) and later on there is the abstract or learning sign (*uggaha nimitta*) There is no conceptualized or counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) in the object of *mettā*.

What is the goal of mettā bhāvanā?

Through *mettā bhāvanā*, we can achieve two types of *samādhi*. The first one is *upacāra samādhi* (access concentration) and the second one is *appanā samādhi* (absorption concentration). Regarding loving kindness, there are three levels of *appanā samādhi*.

The first stage is the first *jhāna*. In the first *jhāna*, *vitakka* (initial application or thought) has an influence of restless energy upon *samādhi* and the other concomitant phenomena (mental factors). By removing *vitakka* or both *vitakka* and *vicāra* (sustained application) we can reach the second stage or second *jhāna*. In this stage, *vicāra* or *pīti* (joy) has an influence upon *samādhi* and the other concomitant phenomena. By removing *vicāra* or both *vicāra* and *pīti*, we can enter into the third stage or third *jhāna*. In this *jhāna*, *pīti* or *sukha* (happiness) has an influence on *samādhi* and the other concomitant phenomena.

One experiences bliss and happiness in this state. The third *jhāna* is the goal of *mettā bhāvanā*.

What are the enemies of mettā?

Mettā has two enemies, one near enemy and one far enemy. *Rāga* (lust) is the near enemy and *dosa* is the far enemy. Both *rāga* and *mettā* see the loveliness of beings. Because of this similarity, *rāga* is the near enemy of *mettā*. *Rāga* pretends that it is *mettā* (*rāgo mettā ya vañceti* - lust deceives loving kindness -). In other words, attachment or passion disguises itself as *mettā*. So, *mettā* should be well protected from *rāga*. We must try to distinguish *mettā* from *rāga* in our minds.

By its nature, *dosa* is dissimilar from *mettā*. For this reason, *dosa* is the far enemy of *mettā*. *Mettā* is the opposite of *dosa* and the antidote of *dosa*. When there is *mettā*, there is agreeableness and coolness in the mind, when there is *dosa*, hatred or ill-will, there is annoyance and heat in the mind.

What is the success and failure of mettā?

Through *mettā*, ill-will, hatred, anger or aversion can be made to subside. Thus, the extinction of *dosa* is the success of *mettā*. The mind is then peaceful and benevolent towards one self and all beings.

Rāga (lust, attachment or passion) and *mettā* are similar in seeing the lovable aspects of beings.

Because of this, *mettā* can easily change its nature to that of *rāga*. Then the mind is not wholesome anymore. Therefore, arising of passion and attachment is the failure of *mettā*.

How to develop mettā

If you wish to develop *mettā*, you must choose the right object of *mettā* at first. At the very beginning, do not choose any of the following four persons as the object of *mettā*:

- a. An antipathetic person (*appiya*)
- b. A very dearly loved friend (*atippiyasahāyaka*)
- c. A neutral person (*majjhata*)
- d. A hostile person (*verī*)

The reason for this is that if you choose an antipathetic person as the object of *mettā* in the very beginning, you will find difficulty in cultivating *mettā* for that person. It is not easy to put an antipathetic person in a dear one's place. And if you choose a dearly loved friend you will also find difficulty in the practice. Because it is not easy to put a very dearly loved friend in a neutral person's place. Yet, if you choose a neutral person at the beginning, you will also find difficulty. Because it is not easy to put a neutral person in a dear one's place. And if you choose a hostile person you will also have difficulty. This is because if you recollect a hostile person, anger will spring up within you. Therefore, do not choose these four people as the object of *mettā* at first.

You must choose a dear, appreciated person as the first object of *mettā*. This person must be of the same sex and still living. If the person is of the opposite sex, *rāga* will spring up within you instead of *mettā*. If the person is no longer alive, you cannot succeed in *mettā bhāvanā*.

As a beginner in the practice of *mettā bhāvanā*, you should choose a quiet place or a quiet hour. To practise, you can take any posture that is comfortable for you.

First of all, you must cultivate *mettā* towards yourself, thinking thus: "May I be happy and free from suffering". This wish for yourself should be repeated to cultivate *mettā* for yourself. This can be done for about five minutes. To start developing *mettā* for other beings, it is useful to think: "I want to be happy and dread pain. So do other beings." By comparing other beings with yourself, you will cultivate *mettā* more easily for the others. Then continue to develop your *mettā* for a dear person thinking thus: "May this person be happy and free from suffering". You must try to keep your spirit of love on this person, thinking of his or her happiness.

In this way, you will be able to get mindfulness (*satī*) and concentration (*samādhi*). When *mettā* mindfulness and concentration arise, the smiling face or other favourite demeanour of the person that is your *mettā* object, will occupy your mind. It is then

necessary to increase your meditation time to progress in the development of *mettā*.

When your *mettā samādhi* develops, the object person will always be with you and will not get out of your mind. When you are able to keep your spirit of love upon that object person then you achieve *upacāra samādhi*. Through *upacāra samādhi*, you will be protected from the five *nīvaraṇa*'s (hindrances). The hindrances are sense desire (*kāmacchanda*), ill-will or hatred (*byāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), mental restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*) and sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*).

When you reach *upacāra samādhi*, you are near the first *jhāna*. You have already deep concentration and must then increase your meditation time to progress in *upacāra samādhi*. Your meditation time should be a minimum of about twenty hours.

When your *samādhi* progresses enough, the first *jhāna* will arise within you. This *samādhi* is called *appanā samādhi*, absorption concentration. Through absorption concentration, you will be able to dispel the five hindrances, temporarily. While you have reached the first *jhāna*, there is neither desire for sensual pleasure, nor any other unwholesome mental state within you. Only initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), joy (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*) and concentration (*ekaggatā*), caused by the absence of the hindrances, occupy your mind.

Then, if you wish to achieve second *jhāna*, you firstly have to establish the first *jhāna* repeatedly. Only when you can hold the first *jhāna* firmly, are you ready to practice for the second *jhāna*. By removing *vitakka* or both *vitakka* and *vicāra*, you are able to enter into the second *jhāna*. In the second *jhāna* there is no *vitakka*, or both *vitakka* and *vicāra* are gone. There is serenity and joy (*pasāda*). Happiness and concentration will be occupying your mind.

If you wish to reach the third *jhāna*, you must try to dispel *pīti* (joy). By removing *pīti*, you are able to achieve the third *jhāna*. In the third *jhāna*, *upekkhā* (equanimity), *sati* (mindfulness), *sampajañña* (clear understanding), *sukha* (happiness) and *samādhi* (concentration) occupy the mind. The third *jhāna* is the goal of *mettā bhāvanā*.

Mettā concentration in the stage of *upacāra samādhi* is a type of *kāmāvacara kusala citta*. It is wholesome consciousness belonging to the sensuous world. In the stage of *appanā samādhi*, *mettā* is a type of *rūpāvacara kusala citta*. This means that it is wholesome consciousness belonging to the world of form. Of these two *kusala*'s, the first one conditions rebirth in one of the pleasurable worlds, *kāmā sugati*. The second one conditions rebirth in a *Brahma* world according to one's *jhāna*.

What effects to expect from mettā bhāvanā?

Through *mettā*, you can eradicate *dosa*. The cessation of *dosa* is the specific consequence of *mettā*. Another important consequence is that *mettā* can pave the way to achieve *vipassanā* knowledge easily.

If your *mettā* meditation has reached the stage of *appanā samādhi*, the *mettā* is strong and you will experience the eleven beneficial consequences of *mettā*. These are the following:

1. *Sukhaṃ supati*
- to sleep comfortably
2. *Sukhaṃ paṭibujjhati*
- to wake in comfort
3. *Na pāpakaṃ supinaṃ passati*
- the sleep is free from nightmares
4. *Manussānaṃ piyo hoti*
- to be dear to human beings
5. *Amanussānaṃ piyo hoti*
- to be dear to non-human beings
6. *Devatā rakkhanti*
- to be guarded by deities
7. *Nāssa aggī vā visaṃ vā satthaṃ vā kamati*
- not affected by fire, poison and weapons
8. *Tuvaṇṇaṃ cittaṃ samādhiyati*
- to achieve mental concentration easily
9. *Mukhavaṇṇo vippasīdati*
- to have a serene appearance

10. *Asammūḷho kālaṃ karoti*
- to die without confusion
11. *Uttariṃ appaṭivijjhanto brahmalokūpago hoti*
- to be reborn in the Brahma world, if there is no chance to attain higher knowledge.

Mettā is so powerful. If you practice *mettā* earnestly, you will succeed. If you have succeeded in *mettā*, there is no doubt that you will experience these benefits.

What is the beginning, the middle and the end of mettā bhāvanā?

The wish to act is the beginning of *mettā*. The cessation of the hindrances is the middle and the attainment of *jhāna* is the end.

Expansion of mettā

When you start to develop *mettā* by practising meditation, your object should be the good friend or loved person, or a benefactor, someone who helped you and supported you. Keeping your mind on this person, you will cultivate mental concentration. When the concentration is strong, and you have reached *upacāra samādhi* or *appanā samādhi*, you may extend the object of *mettā*.

After the friend or respected person, you can develop loving kindness towards a very dearly loved friend, after that towards a neutral person. Then

develop *mettā* towards a hostile person in your life or an enemy. Transfer the *mettā* to the next person when it is has become strong with the current person. If resentment arises when you apply your mind to a hostile person because wrong doing of that person is remembered, then try to get rid of the resentment by entering repeatedly into loving-kindness *jhāna* towards any of the afore mentioned persons. Then, after emerging from *jhāna* each time, direct the loving kindness towards that hostile person.

When your resentment towards the hostile person has come to a rest, then you can turn your mind with loving kindness towards that hostile person too, just as to the one who is dear, the very dear friend, and the neutral person.

Next, you can further expand loving kindness to all directions. Here is the order of extending the object of *mettā*. At first, a single dwelling should be taken and *mettā* is developed towards all beings there. For example, all beings in this monastery or in this building. When your mind has become malleable and wieldy with respect to that, you can then choose two dwellings. Next you can choose three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten dwellings, one street, half the village, the whole village, the district, the country.

Then further one can radiate the loving kindness into one direction and develop *mettā* towards all beings in that direction. Next to all

directions, and so on, up to one world sphere, or even beyond that. The *mettā* then becomes boundless. One's heart is imbued with loving kindness, free from any kind of hostility and free from affliction.

The Buddha mentions this in the *Karaṇīya mettā sutta* as follows:

*"Mātā yathā niyam puttam,
āyusā eka-puttam-anurakkhe
Evampi sabbabhūtesū
mānasam bhāvaye aparimānaṃ"*

- Just as a mother would protect
her only child with her life
Even so, let one cultivate boundless *mettā*
towards all beings. -

From mettā bhāvanā to vipassanā bhāvanā

After having succeeded in *mettā bhāvanā*, you must practice *vipassanā* based on *mettā*. When you practice *vipassanā* based on *mettā*, the object of *vipassanā* should be your *mettā citta* in the beginning. The *mettā citta* is in fact the mental factor of *adosa* and its associated wholesome states. To change to *vipassanā*, one brings the mind from the object of the person or all beings (*paññatti*) to the experiences of *mettā* in the heart (*mettā citta*). Then you analyze this mind (*nama*) further by means of its individual characteristics (*sabhāva lakkhaṇa*).

The Buddha said in this last verse of the *Karaṇīya mettā sutta*:

*"Diṭṭhiñca anupagamma sīlavā
dassanena sampanno
Kāmesu vineyya gedham,
nahi jātu gabbhaseyyam punaretīti."*²

Herein, by the word "*sīlavā*" the Buddha mentioned the important factor that precedes meditation. You must have good *sīla*, ethical conduct, to practice meditation. You must practice *sīla* to purify the mind, and then the mind can easily concentrate.

"*Diṭṭhiñca anupagamma*", means not falling into wrong view. By this, the Buddha referred to *sotapatti magga-ñāṇa* (the knowledge of the path of the stream enterer). In the stream enterer, wrong view is eradicated. The wrong view refers to beings. *Mettā*'s object is a being or beings. This is not a reality, but a name concept. The perception of being (*satta saññā*) occupies the mind of those who practise *mettā*. Therefore, you must develop the knowledge to distinguish *nama* and *rūpa* - mind and matter - by switching to *vipassanā*.

"*Dassanena sampanno*", means to have *vipassanā* knowledge and the knowledge of path

2 - Not falling into wrong views — being virtuous, endowed with insight, discarded lust in the senses— surely never again will he return conceived in a womb. -

(*magga ñāṇa*). In other words, through *vipassanā*, you can achieve *magga ñāṇa*, path knowledge. Through *sotapatti magga-ñāṇa*, you can eradicate the perception of being (*satta sañña*). When you have eradicated the perception of being, there is no chance for any wrong view to arise within you.

"*Kāmesu vineyya gedhaṃ*", means to discard the lust in the senses. By this, the Buddha meant *anāgāmi magga-ñāṇa* that eradicates sense desire. This is the path of the non-returner. An *anāgāmi* has eradicated all sensuous craving (*kāmarāga*) and ill-will (*byāpāda*).

"*Nahi jātu gabbhaseyyaṃ punaretīti.*" This means that one never returns to a womb again, is never conceived again. By these words, the Buddha referred to *arahatta magga-ñāṇa*. An Arahant, a pure hearted one, has eradicated all mental defilements and is not reborn again.

Conclusion

"Through *mettā* and *vipassanā*, may you attain the higher knowledge." In saying my wish to you, let me conclude the discourse on *mettā bhāvanā*.

Sadhu - sadhu - sadhu!

Sabbadānaṃ dhamma dānaṃ jināti

The gift of *Dhamma* excels all gifts

On the occasion of the 75th birthday of their greatly respected teacher venerable sayadaw dr. Nandamālābhivāṃsa, the first print of this book was donated by students from the Netherlands: Jotika Hermsen, Simin Abravesh, Inez Roelofs, Nynke Humalda, Riët Aarsse (Dhammacari).

Sādhu - Sādhu - Sādhu!

